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DEMOCRACY ON STILTS: BOLIVIA'S DEMOCRACY  
FROM STABILITY TO CRISIS

by

Miguel Centellas

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the  
Faculty of The Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Political Science

Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
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# DEMOCRACY ON STILTS: BOLIVIA'S DEMOCRACY FROM STABILITY TO CRISIS

Miguel Centellas, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2007

Bolivia's recent political crisis starkly contrasts to the preceding two decades of relative democratic stability. Though a unique system of "parliamentarized" presidentialism together with lingering consensus on the national project inherited from the 1952 Revolution supported democratic stability, using qualitative and quantitative methods, this study shows that seemingly benign changes in institutional design made in the 1990s contributed to the acceleration of already existing tendencies towards divisive sectoral, regional, and ethnic politics. A key observation is that successful long-term democratization requires institutions for adequately channeling and representing social demands as well as a shared vision of a political "imagined community" that encourages both pluralism and civic attachment. The study ends with a discussion of the ongoing political crisis and speculation about when and to what degree institutional design can help promote nation building in divided societies.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of a long intellectual journey that would not have been possible without the support of numerous people. For most of my life, I watched Bolivia's democratization from the distant sidelines of Michigan, ever eager to see my birthplace develop into the kind of democracy that I enjoyed in my new country. The journey, thus, begins with both my parents. Their support of my choice to pursue an "academic" rather than a more "practical" career path was an unexpected surprise.

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Miguel Centellas

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## POLITICAL MAP OF BOLIVIA



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## CHAPTER 1

### BOLIVIA'S FRAGILE DEMOCRACY

After two decades of remarkable political stability, Bolivia's democratic future became uncertain after 17 October 2003, when Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada resigned the presidency amid widespread social unrest—known as the *guerra del gas*—that left at least 59 dead.<sup>1</sup> During the next three years, Bolivia lurched from one crisis to the next. While the *guerra del gas* encompassed a wide array of social movements—many with divergent and contradictory goals—the common denominator was opposition to neoliberal policies.<sup>2</sup> Still, the protests were remarkably regional in their base, drawing strength primarily from the Andean departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Oruro. In contrast, other movements in the hydrocarbons-rich lowland departments of Santa Cruz and Tarija defended neoliberal policies while also demanding greater regional political autonomy. Since October 2003, Bolivia's government has struggled to balance these antagonistic demands: greater political

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<sup>1</sup> This commonly accepted figure comes from Bolivia's Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos (APDH), an independent human rights organization. The Amnesty International investigative report lists 68 dead, based on available media reports. The events are known as the *guerra del gas* (or “gas war”) because among the protests' central demands was a call for greater state control over hydrocarbon (specifically, natural gas) resources, stemming from the argument that international agreements did not adequately benefit Bolivians.

<sup>2</sup> I assign no normative value (pejorative or otherwise) to the terms “neoliberal” or “neoliberalism.” I merely mean the free market economic policies that became dominant beginning in the 1970s and which endorse limited state involvement in economic affairs as a formula for economic growth. In the literature on Latin America, this is also sometimes referred to as “the Washington Consensus.” In the Bolivian context, the adoption of neoliberal policies meant an economic structural adjustment that included (among other things) transferring state-owned industries into private ownership. For discussions of neoliberalism in Bolivia see Conaghan and Malloy 1995, Gamarra 1994, and Sachs and Morales 1988.

(and economic) autonomy from the wealthiest departments on the one hand, against calls for a stronger state role in the economy on the other. In the last two years, many wondered not only whether Bolivia could reestablish some sort of political stability, but even whether the country's basic territorial integrity would survive the sharp regional antagonists that had burst to the surface.

### **Democracy on Stilts**

To illustrate both the previous period of remarkable political stability and the recent instability I suggest the image of “democracy on stilts.” Bolivian representative democracy—so long as it relied principally on elite pacts—was in many ways “suspended” and distant from most of the polity's citizens. Like stilt-walkers, Bolivia's political elites attempted to maintain their balance upon a delicate set of institutions (their “stilts”) that were not deeply rooted in all sectors of civil society. Even when their policies were well intentioned, Bolivian political elites—and the democracy they represented and served—remained, like stilt walkers, elevated above the easy reach of ordinary citizens. Yet attempts by citizens to “climb” up the political stilts (sometimes with the assistance of political elites themselves) have destabilized the political system (much as if a passerby tried to climb up onto the shoulders of a stilt-walker).

Thus, the image of democracy on stilts suggests a disconnection between elites and voters, the precarious balance of such a relationship, and the dilemma of changing this relationship without simultaneously bringing the whole structure (democracy) crashing down. Efforts by various social movements—and traditional political elites themselves—to change the nature of this relationship and to improve the quality of Bolivian democracy have, ironically, further weakened the relationship between the Bolivian state and civil

society. The long-standing tensions and frustrations with Bolivian democracy were readily apparent during the October 2003 *guerra del gas* and the ensuing on-going political crisis.

While the 2003 *guerra del gas* was more widely covered in the international media, the parallel *autonomista* (pro-autonomy) movements of the eastern lowlands were equally important. Two rallies, one on 23 June 2004 and another on 28 January 2005, organized by the department's Comité Cívico turned out over a hundred thousand pro-autonomy supporters in the city of Santa Cruz.<sup>3</sup> Joined by movements from other lowland (and hydrocarbon-rich) departments, they raised the possibility of secession. The *autonomista* demands were significant (though not the only factors) in driving Carlos Mesa (who assumed the presidency after Sánchez de Lozada's resignation) to resign his own presidency on 9 June 2005. Agreements to hold a referendum on regional autonomy—similar to the 18 July 2004 hydrocarbons referendum—were consistently delayed until late 2005, in large part because of opposition from many of the social movements that had spearheaded the *guerra del gas*. When Eduardo Rodríguez, the last in the presidential line of succession, assumed the office, his announcement of prefect elections in the 18 December 2005 general elections amounted to something of a compromise.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, both the *guerra del gas* and *autonomista* protests demonstrate a new and deep polarization in Bolivian politics, one that has regional,

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<sup>3</sup> The highest estimate, by the Santa Cruz newspaper *El Deber*, put the January 2005 rally numbers at 350,000. That rally, especially, was organized well ahead of time, and included participants from the department's countryside, as well as from other eastern lowland departments.

<sup>4</sup> The 2005 prefect elections would be the first in Bolivia's history; previously, presidents appointed prefects to the nine departments. Constitutionally, Rodríguez (head of the Supreme Court) was charged with calling for general elections within 90 days of assuming the presidential office; because of political conflict over legislative seat apportionment, covered in Chapter 7, the elections were delayed until 18 December.

ideological, and ethnic cleavages converging in a way that fundamentally alter the country's political climate.

In contrast, the two decades immediately following Bolivia's transition to democracy had highlighted a new period of exceptionalism. Rather than a perennial South American basket case, Bolivia was an unexpected success story. At the very least, the country stood in stark contrast to its Andean neighbors.<sup>5</sup> During the 1990s, some scholars even argued that Bolivia was a case of successful democratic consolidation (R. Mayorga 1992, Linz 1994, Whitehead 2001). During this period of optimism, René Antonio Mayorga (1997) lauded what he called Bolivia's "silent revolution," built around the institutions of "parliamentarized presidentialism." Other analysts also looked to its unique quasi-parliamentary institutional design to explain Bolivia's nearly two decades of democratic political stability (Shugart and Carey 1992, Conaghan and Malloy 1995, and Gamarra 1997).

Beyond mere political stability, Bolivia was also noted for a remarkable degree of governability not found in other countries in the region. Catherine Conaghan and James Malloy (1995) point out that of the three Central Andean republics, only Bolivia successfully implemented neoliberal economic reforms in the 1980s. In large part, they argue, Bolivia was successful because coalition governments provided executives with the necessary legislative majorities. René Antonio Mayorga (1992; 1997), Eduardo Gamarra (1994), and Grace Ivana Deheza (1997) made similar arguments, emphasizing the role of successful multiparty

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<sup>5</sup> Both Ecuador and Peru began their transitions to democracy about the same time as Bolivia (1978-1979). Yet Peru suffered an authoritarian relapse in 1992, after Alberto Fujimori's *autogolpe* (self-coup). Ecuador has limped from one political crisis to the next, with the forced removal of three presidents and several military interventions (including kidnapping a president). While Colombia and Venezuela both were established democracies, Colombia's democracy has been besieged since the 1970s by significant left-wing guerrilla insurgencies, right-wing paramilitaries, and drug cartels that control as much as half the national territory. Venezuela, like Peru, has reverted to a form of authoritarianism under the populist Hugo Chavez since 1998.

coalition governments. Unlike many of their neighbors, Bolivian presidents governed with support of majoritarian, multiparty coalitions. Conventional wisdom suggested that the country's institutional design was in large measure responsible for both the country's striking political stability and its governability by consistently producing such majoritarian coalition governments. A multinational study by Mark Jones (1995) found that a dummy variable "Bolivia" was significantly correlated with majoritarian presidents (presidents supported by a legislative majority coalition). Support for centripetal, majoritarian coalition politics seemed to come from a shared elite consensus on key political and economic issues (most notably, support for neoliberalism), as well as agreement on the basic question—what I call "the *demos* question"—of what the Bolivian political community (or polity) should look like.

The dramatic collapse of an institutionally and democratically elected government marked a clear turning point in Bolivia's political history. The inability of both the Sánchez de Lozada and the later Mesa administrations to successfully manage social unrest made it glaringly obvious that something had failed in the Bolivian polity. Previous mechanisms of moderated bargaining and stable majoritarian coalition politics were no longer able to channel, address, or restrain social demands. While I do not believe that Bolivia's democracy has completely broken down, it seems clear that the system has undergone a process of "deconsolidation" (that is, the weakening of support for established democratic institutions and processes). The December 2005 elections offered an opportunity for a new political transformation that could reinvigorate the democratization process. The election of Evo Morales was dramatic for two reasons: First, Morales was the first president elected by a popular majority (53.7% of the vote) rather than by the legislature. Second, the 2005 election swept away the established multiparty system, producing a nascent two-party system centered around two parties: MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) and Podemos (Poder

Democrático y Social). As of this writing, is not yet clear what the Morales government will mean for the future of Bolivia.

### **The Paradox of Democratization**

Ironically, the democratization process and the adoption of a new liberal-pluralist discourse by political elites have put the Bolivian state—and, subsequently, Bolivian democracy—in jeopardy. On the one hand, the public embracing of the polity's cultural pluralism legitimized pre-existing ethnic or regionalist claims against the central state's authority. On the other hand, the turning away from the 1952 national state model (particularly the state's economic functions) were resisted by those who least benefited from neoliberal policies and, hence, clung to the previous national imaginary. In short, the very success of the democratic transition weakened the state's claim to sovereign authority.

This is what I call the “paradox of democratization.”<sup>6</sup> The very process of a transition to democracy asks citizens to imagine for themselves a better political community, to imagine a democratic polity markedly different from the one they experience. A democratic transition is, then, a process of political imagining. But because democracy is (in large measure) a method of open political contestation, this form of imagining takes on a more fluid, chaotic character. Different visions of a “new Bolivia” emerge and compete against each other. And as with any political competition, there are winners and losers.

One way to understand the current Bolivian political crises is as struggles between different competing political imaginaries. I identify three competing discourses: The first is the older, *state-corporatist* discourse inherited from 1952, with its emphasis on a single national

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<sup>6</sup> This “paradox” is also similar to the “dilemma” of pluralist democracy identified by Robert Dahl (see Dahl 1982), which pits the competing claims of a need for political authority and individual autonomy.

community and state control over natural resources. Another is the new *liberal-pluralist* discourse that emphasizes a multicultural, diverse society based on individual (not collective) rights and a laissez faire state. The third encompasses various *sectarian-communal* discourses based on smaller, more local attachments based on shared cultural identity.<sup>7</sup> This discourse has two broad manifestations in Bolivia. One is the set of various indigenous discourses that challenges the “neocolonial” Bolivian state and calls for political autonomy for indigenous communities. The other includes the regionalist discourses coming from places like Santa Cruz and Tarija, which similarly challenge the “centralist” Bolivian state and demand regional political autonomy and self-government.

As these competing discourses clash, the continued existence of a single polity has come into open question. If democratization emphasizes rights of self-determination and popular sovereignty, how can a democratic state legitimately prevent the “Balkanization” of politics? If democracy is consolidated when it becomes “the only game in town” as Linz and Stepan (1996) argue, what prevents the players from taking their ball and going home? Even if democracy is the only game in town, must it be played on one field? Can it be played on two or more fields? At the heart of this democratization paradox is the problem of democracy in societies that are culturally divided—particularly when those divisions coincide with socioeconomic cleavages. In the Bolivian case, with hydrocarbons heavily concentrated in one region of the country, the availability of competing political discourses means that disaffected regional leaders who become “losers” in the national arena have powerful incentives to simply adopt a different, regional discourse and claim that they are, in fact, a

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<sup>7</sup> This latter set of discourses fits under into the general type of sectarian tendencies identified by Benjamin Barber (1996).

different political community altogether.<sup>8</sup> This is as true for indigenous proponents of a Kollasuyu as it is for regionalist proponents of a Nación Camba.

The October 2003 protests marked a resurgence of the state-corporatist discourse of 1952. Evo Morales and his supporters are less part of a wave of “new left” or “socialist” governments in the region than a return to the principles of the Bolivian national revolution. It is not merely a historical irony that the core principal demand of the *guerra del gas* protest involved the loss of national control over the very resource Bolivians fought to defend in the 1932-1935 Chaco War with Paraguay. Similarly, calls by regional leaders in Santa Cruz and Tarija for secession in defense the right to exploit and export “their” resources as they wish were met by counter-claims by Andean Bolivians that “their” blood had been spilled in defense of this “national” resource. The current conflict over natural gas exports is thus transported into “homogeneous, empty time” through a process of collective imagining and the mythos of the collective suffering and struggle in the trenches of the Chaco is made present.<sup>9</sup> Morales’ discourse is less socialist than nationalist; when he speaks of “recovering” of the nation’s resources he echoes the founding fathers of post-Chaco Bolivian nationalism.

In contrast, a growing number of Bolivians (particularly in Santa Cruz and Tarija) have begun embracing a new communal identity. Often, this identity is referenced in opposition to an “Andean” Bolivian identity.<sup>10</sup> This new identity is supported by a

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<sup>8</sup> Several scholars have pointed to the relationship between economic incentives and the emergence of “national” liberation movements within established states. For an economic analysis of such phenomenon, see P. Collier 2001.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of “homogenous, empty time” see Anderson 1991.

<sup>10</sup> This “anti-Andean” discourse is remarkably similar to the “anti-colonial” indigenous discourse; both make consistent reference to a political, social, and economic “other.” Like the latter, the regionalist discourse



competing national imaginary constructed in much the way as described in Anderson's model. In the past ten years, a series of monuments to regional heroes have gone up throughout Santa Cruz, along with a renaissance of regional folk culture in public festivals, and even in history museums and other academic establishments such as literature.<sup>11</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that regionalist calls for secession to establish a "Camba Nation" resonate with much of the region's population. Ironically, the sectarian discourses are further reinforced by the liberal-pluralist discourse, which consciously emphasizes and publicly celebrates the country's cultural differences.

In large measure, the quest to establish a new Bolivian political stability depends on the acceptance by an increasingly fractured population that they do in fact comprise one single political community, and not two or more such communities, while still respecting their plurality. In short, Bolivia is dealing with the central questions raised by Robert Dahl in *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy* (1982)—that is, the struggle of a democratic state to exercise effective central state authority and control in midst of legitimate calls for greater civic, political, and associational autonomy. Similarly, the Bolivian case illustrates the tension in modern political life outlined by Benjamin Barber, who argued in *McWorld vs. Jihad* (1996) that modern states were undermined by pressures from both globalization and sectarian factionalism. If democracy requires viable, institutionalized states as Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) argue, then the erosion of modern states is a problem for young democracies. The challenge for Bolivian democrats—if Bolivia is to remain a single democratic state—is

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denounces the "exploitation" of some "outsider" privileged political group (in La Paz) and its attempt to "impose" its culture (the image of Bolivia as an "Andean nation").

<sup>11</sup> In recent years, television newscasts in Santa Cruz have consciously chosen to use regional dialect, rather than "standard" Spanish. There is also a dictionary of the regional *camba* dialect. All this closely resembles the process of nation-building described by Anderson 1991.

to find a new balance that keeps democracy from breaking down while managing the problems of accommodating the legitimate claims from different elements of civil society.

### **From Democratic Stability to Crisis of Legitimacy**

This dissertation seeks to explain how Bolivia's nearly two decades of political stability gave way to a period of instability followed by a radical break that fundamentally altered the status quo. I begin with a model similar to one presented by David Held for explaining the social unrest in post-industrial liberal democracies in the 1960s (Held 1996, pp. 233-253). The model (see Figure 1.1) suffers from the same problem of determinism as in the original "overloaded government" and "legitimation crisis" models, since it suggests that the recent democratic crisis was inevitable. Rather than a predictive one, however, my model is merely a descriptive one that seeks to illustrate Bolivia's political progress from stability to crisis. It is also important to note that the dissertation's key explanatory variable—electoral system design—is absent from the illustrative model. The various "steps" in the flowchart are best understood as occurring *within* established institutional constraints. As evidence presented later in this dissertation will support, changes to these institutional constraints exacerbated an already emerging crisis of legitimacy.

While the Bolivian case is clearly different than the advanced industrial democracies from which the model is developed, many of the features described by theorists of "overloaded government" and theorists of "legitimation crisis" apply to the Bolivian case as well.<sup>12</sup> In the place of the erosion of confidence in a post-industrial welfare state, my model

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<sup>12</sup> A recent APSA conference paper by Malone and Baviskar (2002) argues that new democracies may be more prone to citizen discontent and legitimation crises than established democracies. For earlier "overloaded

looks at the erosion of confidence in a newly democratized regime consistent with the paradox of democratization. As such, I accept many of the pluralist arguments of the overloaded government theorists, as well as the more radical critiques of liberal democracy's ability to manage social and economic conflicts presented by the legitimation crisis theorists.

The key features of this model are spelled out in Figure 1.1 and are briefly discussed below.

1a. Political power is fragmented among a plurality of groups (class, ethnic, regional, etc.) but is exercised by political parties. Though parties compete in the formal electoral arena, their power is constrained by economic realities. Still, the transition to democracy makes government more responsive to social demands.

1b. The economy is characterized by neoliberal policies, which involve dismantling the state's previous role in economic affairs and significant structural adjustments. Neoliberal reforms are at first successful in stabilizing the economy.

2. Expectation increase. Politically, individuals and groups begin to expect an increase in freedoms and greater autonomy. Economically, citizens expect greater prosperity to follow the transition to a market economy.

3. Rising expectations are reinforced by a "decline in deference" consistent with a transition from authoritarianism to democracy. As the political system liberalizes, respect for political authority diminishes.

4. A combination of increased expectations and declining deference leads groups to increasingly press the new democratic government to meet various sectoral (and often contradictory) demands.

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government" arguments see Brittan 1975, Huntington 1975, Nordhaus 1975, King 1976, and Rose and Peters 1977. For "legitimation crisis" arguments see Habermas 1976 and Offe 1984.

5. In part to maximize their vote-winning potential, political elites adopt short-term strategies and promise more than they are able to deliver to their constituents. Electoral competition drives parties to continuously increase their promises. Populist parties also emerge, capitalizing on unmet expectations.

6. Aspirations increase as voters continue to seek political alternatives that promise to meet their expectations. This leads groups to continue to press sectoral demands. This loop (steps 4-6) continues until the political system becomes overloaded.

7. Once demands increase beyond a critical point, political elites adopt policies of “appeasement” as they try to co-opt as many different sectoral groups under their banner to maximize their vote-winning potential. Similarly, the state ceases to exercise its authority but instead engages in negotiations with sectoral groups under increasing which channel their demands into direct action, rather than the representative political process. Meanwhile, a “rationality crisis” ensues as the state becomes increasingly used as a means to distribute patronage (in efforts by elites to secure political support and governability).

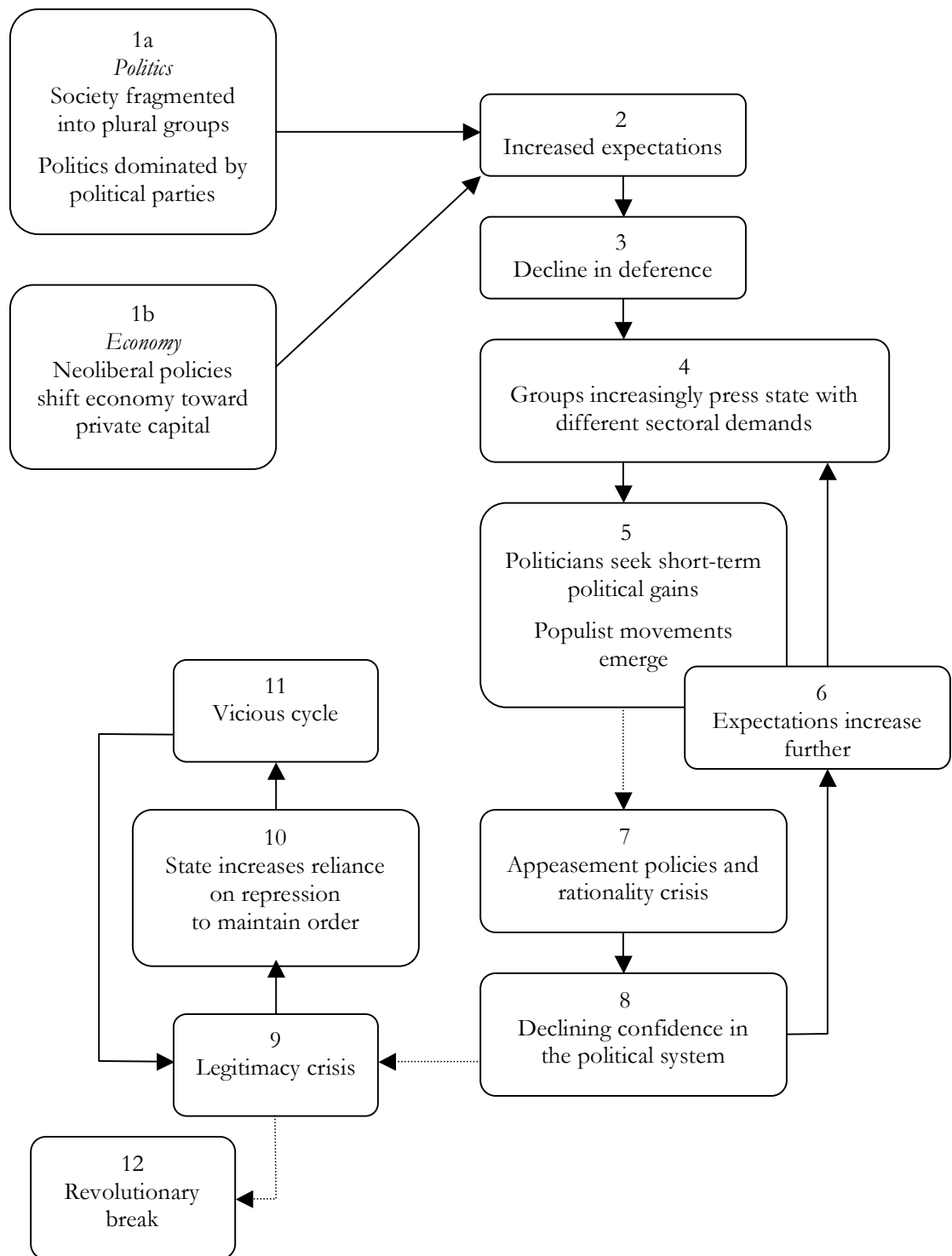
8. The combination of an ineffective state and unmet (but increasing) expectations leads to decline in confidence in the state and political system—especially political parties.

9. If increasing demands are not met by available alternatives, the political party system soon faces a crisis of legitimacy as calls for reform are replaced by calls for revolutionary change.

10. Increasingly under siege and facing a loss of public legitimacy among much of the population, the state eventually responds with repressive force in efforts to maintain political and economic stability.

Figure 1.1

From Stability to Crisis



11. This initiates a vicious cycle: The state continuously relies on repression to maintain public order in the face of increasingly aggressive public manifestations. This only heightens the legitimacy crisis.

12. The combination of continued decline in public confidence in the political system, continuously increasing demands, growing social unrest, and the state's reliance on repression may lead to a revolutionary break.

This is what happened in October 2003.<sup>13</sup> Over two decades, public confidence in the political system slowly eroded even as political elites continued to engage in short-term electoral calculations. But in the late 1990s, this process accelerated. Increasingly frequent violent social unrest and state repression—for example, the April 2000 Cochabamba “water war” and the February 2003 *impuestazo* revolt—demonstrated a legitimacy crisis from at least 2000 onward.

This dissertation focuses primarily on step 5 of the model and one set of decisions political elites made and their consequences. One of the contributing factors to the crisis of legitimacy facing Bolivia's democracy stemmed from a series of electoral institutional reforms meant, ironically, to improve and deepen the country's liberal representative democracy. These reforms opened up new arenas for political participation, decentralized the state and devolved power to local communities, and allowed for greater representation of

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<sup>13</sup> This process also describes what Ernesto Laclau (2005) calls the construction of an “equivalential chain” in which a series of unrelated unmet demands overload existing institutional system and produce a populist rupture. In such a chain, any single sector demand can—by resonating with the broader public and representing (as “empty signifier”) for the general popular dissatisfaction with existing institutions and leader—spearhead a broad social movement. By October 2003, the popular slogan “*el gas no se vende*” unified a host of small, diverse, and often contradictory social demands into a single force that expressed widespread popular dissatisfaction.

previously marginalized groups. Such reforms further restrict state capacity even as citizen expectations increase.

At this point, the institutional reforms limited the ability of established political parties to co-opt subaltern groups. The new reforms made it easier—and more appealing—for such groups to strike out on their own (first towards populist parties, later to “anti-systemic” parties)—rather than incorporate into established political parties. But as political representation became more diversified, the ability to establish centripetal, multiparty, majoritarian government coalitions diminished. As Scott Mainwaring (2006) and Robert Barr (2005) recently argue, political reforms meant to improve and deepen democracy, ironically, can contribute to a crisis of legitimacy.

Robert Barr echoes this dissertation’s main argument when he writes:

“The paradox is that Bolivia [during the 1990s] has been the focus of some of the most radical and innovative reforms in Latin American. Implementing those reforms, however, raised popular expectations beyond the state’s ability to meet them” (2005, p. 70).

In contrast to the common perception that political crises in the Andes were a product of a “crisis of representation,” Mainwaring instead suggests that political representation had improved across the Andes and that political elites were particularly attuned to problems of under-representation since the 1980s. Focusing on state weakness as the primary factor in the Andean crises, Mainwaring proposes a “paradox of representation”—that political elites may unintentionally contribute to political crises in efforts to improve political representation. Mainwaring’s argument fits the “legitimation crisis” model outlined above. This dissertation aims to explore the historical trajectory of this paradox.

## Indigenous Movements and Economic Factors

In addition to the role played by institutional factors on Bolivia's recent political instability (the focus of this dissertation), two additional factors should be briefly considered. The first is the impact of emerging ethnic movements—particularly Andean indigenous social movements—as a new political force in Bolivia. The second is the impact of economic conditions, which are frequently cited in mainstream international media accounts as a powerful political factor. No doubt both of these factors play important roles in Bolivian politics—and particularly in the October 2003 *guerra del gas*. Yet neither factor can sufficiently explain why the Bolivian crisis happened when it did.

Indigenous social movements are not a new phenomenon in Bolivia. The origins of many rural (peasant) indigenous organizations can be traced back to the 1940s. And the “new” social movements and organizations were active in Bolivian politics since at least the mid-1970s. A host of small but influential *katarista* (Andean indigenous) parties were actively involved in the earliest moments of the democratization process, with at least one *katarista* party running a slate of candidates in every election since 1978. In 1993, the leader of the largest of these parties (MRTKL) was elected to the vice presidency as Sánchez de Lozada's running mate. Clearly, indigenous organizations were not only active throughout Bolivia's democratic experience, they had a significant voice in political life. Instead, an interesting question is why indigenous organizations were less likely to become integrated into the political process after the 1990s.

Similarly, Bolivia's economic situation in 2000-2003 cannot by itself adequately explain the post-2003 political rupture. While Bolivia remains poor, overall socioeconomic



indicators did steadily improve since the 1980s.<sup>14</sup> The political unrest of the 2000-2003 was neither accompanied nor preceded by a massive economic shock. Certainly, there was no parallel to the regional economic crisis of the 1980s (the “lost decade”), which hit Bolivia particularly hard. Bolivia’s economic crisis of 1982-1985 (when inflation reached 25,000%) led to the resignation of Hernán Siles Zuazo and early elections, but was comparatively less disruptive than the 2003-2005 political crisis. Again, while widespread poverty and other socioeconomic problems are no doubt contributing factors in the recent crisis, they cannot adequately explain the *timing* of the recent crisis. In many ways, the perception of economic crisis was perhaps more powerful than the actual economic reality.<sup>15</sup> And one important factor that allowed this perception to spread was that popular expectations increased in the 1990s. Perhaps what mattered most was not that neoliberal economic reforms did not work, but that they did not live up to expectations. So why did expectations increase and how did expectations about the state’s economic role change?

If deep ethnic or cultural divisions and chronic economic problems are primarily to blame for Bolivia’s current political crisis, then we face two dilemmas. The first is that we cannot explain the timing of the rupture—other than as the culmination of some “inevitable” process. The second is that as the political crisis exacerbates ethno-cultural

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<sup>14</sup> Bolivia’s economy grew steadily at an annual rate of 4-5% during the 1990s. After a sharp downturn in 1999 (when the economy grew only 0.6%), a modest recovery with average growth rates of 2.5% followed from 2000-2003. The overall result was noticeable reduction in poverty and other improvements to socioeconomic conditions. While Bolivia continued to be poor, it was relatively “less poor” in the 2000s than in the 1980s. Data from UNDP 2006, Latin American Bureau 2000, and IMF annual reports.

<sup>15</sup> In numerous informal interviews with Bolivian scholars conducted between October 2003 and March 2004, most emphasize that the current crisis was “political” (rather than “economic”) in nature. Notable among these were Carlos Toranzo (an economist and ILDIS co-director) and René Antonio Mayorga (a political scientist and CEBEM director).

tensions and as economic hardships continue, we again expect the crisis to continue, with no solution in sight. Instead, I pursue an approach similar to Adam Przeworski's (1991) explanation for the collapse of East European communism. Though in hindsight, many could point to reasons for communism's collapse (the "cancer"), Przeworski sought to distinguish the precipitating condition (the "pneumonia"). Like Przeworski, I come to the conclusion that institutional reforms aimed at "liberalizing" the political and economic system precipitated a political rupture—a "regime crisis"—by both increasing popular expectations and limiting the ability of regime elites to manage popular demands.

### **Plan of the Study**

The remainder of this dissertation charts the progress of Bolivia's recent democratic experience and explores the relationship between the ongoing democratization process and the political crisis of the last few years. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework that grounds the discussion of the Bolivian case into three distinct theoretical literatures: 1) the literature on democracy and democratic consolidation, 2) the literature on political institutions, and 3) the literature on nationalism and political imaginaries. An attempt is made to reconcile these three distinct literature traditions—particularly the literature on "national imaginaries"—into a framework for analyzing new democracies. The remainder of the chapter also details the dissertation's methodological framework.

Chapter 3 is devoted to an exploration of the legacies of the 1952 National Revolution. Keeping with the "historical institutionalist" tradition, this chapter outlines the continued impact on formal and informal political institutions carried over from the early twentieth century. This chapter tackles two specific "legacies" inherited from the pre-transition period: 1) a state-corporatist political discourse and "integrationist" national

imaginary and 2) the tradition of populist political organization and weakly institutionalized political parties.

Chapter 4 gives a qualitative description of Bolivia's political institutions—particularly the “parliamentary presidential” model. The chapter also outlines the country's party system, its basic constitutional framework, and an overview of the electoral geography.

Chapters 5-7 provide descriptive qualitative and quantitative analysis of Bolivia's three electoral periods (outlined in Chapter 4). Chapter 5 looks at the 1985, 1989, and 1993 elections. Chapter 6 analyzes at the 1997 and 2002 elections. Chapter 7 tackles the most recent presidential and prefectural elections. Each chapter is preceded by a brief discussion that highlights the break between this period and the one that preceded it, as well as the effects of the previous period on the one that followed. Each election is considered separately, with descriptions of the political parties, electoral process and campaigns, and the ensuing coalition-building process.

Chapter 8 offers a set of statistical tests to a series of research hypotheses concerning the causes of the political crisis. Namely, that the current political polarization is driven in large measure by regional political cleavages and that this regional polarization is serially correlated with changes to the electoral system. The purpose of this chapter is to present evidence in support of the dissertation's main argument—that the recent Bolivian political crisis is a product of the two-decades-long democratization process.

Finally, Chapter 9 merely offers some concluding remarks, though with an eye to the most recent developments in Bolivia following the election of Evo Morales in December 2005. Most especially, the conclusion offers some brief analysis of the July 2006 constituent assembly election, placing it within the theoretical argument presented in this dissertation. The constituent assembly is self-consciously aimed at “re-imagining” the Bolivian polity.

Thus, the process is a crucial moment which could deepen Bolivian democracy, transcending the current crisis of legitimacy—or the assembly could devolve into yet another populist plebiscite meant only to strengthen a sitting president.

## CHAPTER 2

### **DEMOCRACY AND “DEMOCRATIC IMAGINARIES”: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

My study of Bolivia’s democratic experience contributes to the ever-growing democratization literature that has charted the progress of the “third wave” of democracy (Huntington 1991). Such studies are frequently marked by several common characteristics: their use of a procedural definition of democracy, an interest in the broader historical context of specific cases, an emphasis on factors of institutional design (especially electoral systems, party systems, and executive-legislative relations), a focus on elite actors and their decisions, and a concern for determining when democratic transformations are secure and immune to reversals. Many of these studies also demonstrate a normative preference for democracy; a preference I, too, share. This bias in favor democracy, combined with a marked institutionalist perspective (the belief that political institutions are vital factors for a democracy’s survival), has led many scholars to pursue “constitutional engineering” as a research agenda aimed at discovering the institutional design best suited for a polity’s successful democratic consolidation (Sartori 1994; Reilly 2001; Reynolds 2002; Norris 2004). This dissertation seeks to understand how institutional engineering has affected Bolivia’s democratic experience in the hope that a richer understanding of Bolivia’s current political crisis may lead to solutions that help revitalize Bolivia’s democracy.

Additionally, this dissertation also contributes to the literature on democratic theory by exploring the conceptual relationship between democratization and the forging of “national” identities. Though most democratization studies adopt a pluralist definition of democracy, these pay little attention to the social construction of the *demos*. Though I, too,

subscribe to pluralist democratic theory (largely because of its operational usefulness for comparative studies) this dissertation draws from the Bolivian case to further inform and expand pluralist democratic theory. In particular, I suggest that comparative studies of democratization should better integrate issues discussed in sociological and anthropological literature on nationalism—particularly the literature on “national imaginaries” (Anderson 1991)—into their analysis and move beyond discussions of democracy in “divided societies” and in particular to explore the ongoing construction of “democratic imaginaries” in modern democratic politics.

### **Democracy, Democratization, and Democratic Consolidation**

The dominant definition of “democracy” used by comparative studies of third wave democracies is one derived from the pluralist theory of democracy, which has also influenced how many scholars conceptualize “democratization” (the process by which a non-democracy is transformed into a democracy) and “democratic consolidation” (the process by which a new democracy is firmly institutionalized). By focusing on the procedural norms necessary for democracy, pluralist theory is well suited to the kind of institutionalist orientation found in many comparative democratization studies. Nevertheless, I wish to draw special attention to three important implications of pluralist theory:

1. The idea of democracy as an ongoing, dynamic process.
2. As a framework for assessing the quality of democracy in individual cases.
3. The question of how the *demos* is defined and redefined as central in the construction of the polity.

## Democracy

Perhaps the single most influential work for comparative democratization studies has been Robert Dahl's *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (1970). Dahl's definition of democracy is both "proceduralist" (emphasizing the procedural or institutional requirements necessary for competitive politics) and "descriptive" (by its attempting to avoid ideal-type formulations of what democracy *should be* in favor of an observational assessment of what democracy *is* in recognized democratic polities).<sup>16</sup> It is important to contrast Dahl's view of democracy as polyarchy with earlier "elitist" theorists of democracy such as Robert Michels (1915), Gaetano Mosca (1939), and Joseph Schumpeter (1943), who reduced liberal democracy to little more than inter-elite electoral competition. While pluralist theorists accepted Schumpeter's critique against a so-called "classical" theory of democracy that defined democracy as an expression of a "common good" or "popular will," they paid closer attention to the ways society can or should exert control over governing elites. This pluralist theory was grounded in earlier studies (Truman 1951; Dahl 1956), which argued that democratic societies were marked by a plurality of groups that gathered together in frequently changing coalitions of minorities. At the core of pluralist theory, therefore, is a rejection of the existence of stable majorities and the belief that political power is widely dispersed in liberal democratic societies, reducing the danger that any single group of elites could become permanently entrenched in power.

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<sup>16</sup> Both elitist and pluralist theories of democracy do, of course, offer a sort of democratic "ideal-type" as well. But this formulation is still, I would argue, sufficiently different from the more "normative" democratic ideals aspired to by other theorists. The "empirical" theorists of democracy emphasize *process* much more than do the "normative" theorists, who instead emphasize the *goals* of democracy.

A central concern in *Polyarchy*—and in subsequent works by Dahl (1982; 1989; 1992) and Giovanni Sartori (1987)—was an examination of the requirements necessary for competitive democratic politics. These can be broken down into three dimensions: competition, participation, and civil and political liberties (Sørensen 1998, p. 12-13). First, polyarchy requires free, open, and peaceful competition between political organizations (that is, political parties) in frequent and meaningful elections. Such competition also demands that individuals are free to form and join political organizations, that these are free to compete for popular support, and that all citizens are eligible for public office. Second, free and open political competition requires a certain degree of active citizen participation (principally, through voting) with universal (or at least near-universal) adult suffrage and principle of one-person-one-vote. Finally, competition and participation are only possible if basic civil rights are protected.

Though the pluralist model of democracy also looks beyond mere electoral politics to ways in which the plural groups in civil society influence political leaders, those who adopt the procedural definition of democracy in comparative politics have often focused primarily on the electoral arena. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan define democracy minimally as “a free competition of power by peaceful means, free elections at regular intervals in a constitutional framework that provides conditions for such a free competition in terms of freedom of speech, of assembly, of political organization” (1978, p. 5-6). Such an approach leads to a focus on political elites (e.g. the leaders of political parties) and inter-elite competition within the electoral process. This approach rests on a key pluralist assumption that liberal democracy provides a “process by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over their leaders” (Dahl 1956, p. 3). Such formulations are remarkably similar to the most well known elitist definition of democracy as “that institutional arrangement for



arriving at political decisions by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1943, p. 269). Pluralists' focus on electoral competition was based in the belief that more participatory forms of democracy were no longer possible in polities the size of nation-states, with thousands (if not millions) of members dispersed across vast distances.

Critics of this procedural definition of democracy argued that it too easily reduced democracy's scope to electoral competition. Proponents of participatory theories of democracy such as Carole Pateman (1970) and Benjamin Barber (1984) argued that such a definition of democracy too readily dismissed the importance of deeper forms of more extensive forms of participation for democratic life, especially for fostering stronger civic attachment to a political community and for promoting human development. Others criticized the underlying liberal foundations in pluralist theory. C. B. Macpherson (1962; 1977) and Carol Gould (1988) challenged liberal-pluralisms underlying assumption of political equality, pointing out that socioeconomic inequalities made political competition less than free and open. Jane Mansbridge (1983) argued that the pluralists' emphasis on competitive politics was problematic, since it meant an implicit acceptance of continuous political conflict as a desirable norm in all aspects of political life. Together, such critics argued that the pluralists' minimalist definition of democracy did not go far enough and suffered from a sort of electoralist reductionism.

Nevertheless, like most comparative democratization studies, I adopt an operational definition of democracy based on Dahl's definition. To avoid confusion, I will use "liberal democracy" or simply "democracy" instead of "polyarchy" throughout this dissertation. A minimalist definition of democracy is practical for comparative studies of democracy because these "deliberately focus on the smallest possible number of attributes that are still seen as producing a viable standard for democracy" (Collier and Levitsky 1997, p. 433).

Before we can discuss a democratic case, we must first agree on a common set of criteria for determining which cases are (or are not) democratic. The use of a minimal operational definition of democracy does not mean that studies of democratic cases are blind to many of the objections raised by the pluralists' critics. It should be clear that the minimal definition of democracy is only a minimum threshold or baseline necessary for a case to be considered democratic rather than some other non-democratic system.

Because such an operational definition of democracy is descriptive, it merely identifies the characteristics common to all cases accepted as meeting the minimal conditions necessary for democracy. Individual democracies vary not only in terms of institutional structure or design (e.g. presidentialism vs. parliamentarism), but also as to their quality. Here, many of the objections to the pluralist theory of democracy are important and can be incorporated into critical evaluations of individual democratic cases. Several comparative democratization studies have developed a typology of "democracy with adjectives" (Collier and Levitsky 1997) meant to identify cases of democracy that, while meeting a minimum operational definition for democracy are "diminished subtypes" (that is, of a lower than desired quality). Clearly, comparative studies of democracy that adopt the pluralists' procedural minimum are actively engaged in a research agenda meant to identify problems within existing democracies. After all, Dahl's *Polyarchy* also specifies that democracy is an ongoing process and that once a democracy is established, a process of (ongoing) "democratic deepening" (that is, the further expansion of competition, participation, and civil rights and political liberties) is essential.

This dissertation argues that, from 1985-2002, Bolivia met the minimal procedural definition of democracy. During this period, Bolivia experienced five consecutive competitive elections that saw free public contestation between rival political parties, the

alternation of power, and relative protection for civil and political liberties such as freedom of the press, speech, and association.<sup>17</sup> Such a pronouncement, of course, should not hide the socioeconomic (and other) problems that existed. These are important and will be addressed throughout the dissertation, as this is in large measure a qualitative historical assessment of the progress of Bolivian democracy throughout that period. Nevertheless, Bolivia's previous non-democratic political experience makes understanding how liberal democracy endured for nearly two decades an important subject for analysis.

A minimal or procedural definition of democracy fits well with comparative democratic studies such as this one for three additional reasons. First, Dahl's conceptual framework includes a strong emphasis on explaining democratization, focusing on the expansion of two dimensions: liberalization (increasing political competition) and inclusiveness (increasing popular participation). Second, this procedural definition's emphasis on electoral participation and competition fits well with studies that focus on the political institutions underlying representative democracy. Finally, a pluralist model can also help explain moments of democratic crisis (Held 1996, p. 242-244). The combination of increasingly higher expectations generated by liberal democracy and early neoliberal economic success can make effective state management increasingly difficult over time.

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<sup>17</sup> The level of protection for civil liberties is, of course, difficult to measure. But there are rudimentary tools available. One is to look at Freedom House indexes from the period. While Bolivia has consistently scored a "3" in terms of civil liberties since from 1982 until the most recent 2006 report (with a peak of "4" in 1994), the country's "political rights" index has fluctuated, from the a baseline "2" set in 1982 to a "1" in 1997, before rising again to "2" in 2003, and then to "3" after 2004. While ratings for civil liberties have remained relatively steady across the pas two decades, ratings for political liberties actually *increased* (and to the highest levels) prior to the October 2003 rupture. For a discussion of Freedom House's methodology, see its most recent report (2006).

## Democratization

Democratization can be understood through a dynamic model that consists of three distinct stages as defined by Dankwart Rustow (1970):

1. A breakdown of the previous non-democratic system.
2. A transition into a democratic (or at least semi-democratic) system that includes increased liberalization and popular participation.
3. A period of democratic consolidation, including the institutionalization of liberal democracy and widespread acceptance of liberal democratic norms.

While recognizing that individual cases of democratic transition contain their own distinct dynamics (or “transition paths”), this framework is useful for comparative democratization studies. According to this approach, the type of pre-existing non-democratic system and the process by which it breaks down affect the type and quality of the democracy that emerges, as well as its prospects for long-term stability and consolidation. Like the pluralist theory of democracy, the transition to democracy is seen in large measure as the result of inter-elite competition between supporters of the non-democratic regime and their opponents. The nature of this breakdown and transition and the choices made by elite actors shape the democratization process in significant ways.

Attention to the democratization process is important for comparative studies of Latin America, a region with little historical experience with democracy. Despite achieving political independence in the early nineteenth century, much of the region’s history has been marked by political centralism (Véliz 1980), elite-led populism or *caudillismo* (Dealy 1992), and political corporatism (Wiarda 1981). Only three countries (Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay) have had prolonged historical experience with liberal democratic politics. The postwar record was especially bleak, with non-democratic regimes firmly entrenched

throughout the region. By the 1970s, even Chile and Uruguay were under authoritarian rule and democratic systems were sustained only in Costa Rica, Colombia, and Venezuela. Nevertheless, the late 1970s also witnessed a global third wave of democracy that saw authoritarian regimes throughout the region give way to democratic transformations.

Previous theories of democratization were closely linked with social modernization theories, which argued that democracy required certain preconditions. Seymour Lipset (1959) and Barrington Moore (1966) had argued that democracy was closely linked with capitalist development and the emergence of a substantial middle class. According to this view, economic development and industrialization would produce a social transformation necessary for democracy. Others, like Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), argued that democracy required a modern or “civic” political culture of the kind that existed in Western, liberal societies. Several scholars challenged such claims. Samuel Huntington (1968) suggested that modernization altered the social status quo and produced social disorder, which encouraged authoritarianism, rather than democracy. The experience of several Latin American countries showed that industrial and economic development might produce a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime, rather than democracy (O'Donnell 1973). Others, such as Terry Lynn Karl (1990) argued that a democratic political culture is a consequence of (and not a precondition for) democracy.

A key advantage of the dynamic democratization model developed by Rustow and is that it focuses on the *process* by which non-democratic states transition towards democracy. Rather than emphasize socioeconomic or cultural preconditions for democracy, the dynamic model emphasizes institutional norms and structures that facilitate liberal politics and representative democracy (particularly, the expansion of competition and participation). Unlike many of the preconditions theories, such models provide an analytic framework to

study individual cases of democratic transition. According to Dahl, the democratization process can follow three basic patterns:

1. An expansion of competition before an expansion in participation.
2. An expansion of participation before an expansion in competition.
3. A simultaneous expansion of competition and participation.

This framework allows for comparative evaluations of different transition paths.

Comparative historical experience suggests that democratization is more likely to succeed when the expansion of competition precedes the expansion of participation. Again, such an approach has led to an emphasis on studies of the role of elites and inter-elite competition during the democratization process. Finally, this dynamic model can also incorporate studies on the role social movements play in democratization and under what conditions such social pressures are successful or unsuccessful.

Several key studies of the democratic transition process have focused on the role of political elites and elite pacts (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Przeworski 1986; Di Palma 1990). Political elites include leaders of political parties and social movements, whether they are members of the government or the opposition. Political elites play a key role in the democratic transition, as conflicts between supporters of authoritarian continuation and those pressing for democracy are resolved (whether through negotiated bargaining or open conflict). By restraining the more radical positions within their ranks, political elites have the ability to establish a basic political consensus on and support for the democracy that emerges from the transition process.<sup>18</sup> It is important to note, however, that the democratizing elites

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<sup>18</sup> An alternative view is to see moderate elites as *repressing* more radical actors. While “restraining” can be stretched to include a more explicit emphasis on repression, the end result is (I argue) not substantially

do not represent a single monolithic entity. There are likely to be important disagreements (ideological, pragmatic, or other) within their ranks. The kind of foundational pact (the elite consensus that signals the end of the non-democratic regime and marks the beginning of the democratic period) has important consequences for the polity's democratic future.

This dynamic approach to democratic transition is useful for an assessment of Bolivia's democratization experience. Although this dissertation does not focus on the transition to democracy, it is important to understand the country's democratic transition process as part of a broader historical and institutional context. Bolivia's democratic transition (1978-1985) was one of the region's longest and most tumultuous, resolved only by a compromise government (1982-1985) based on an inter-elite consensus. In large measure, Bolivia's democracy was also sustained from 1985 through 2002 by a series of elite agreements (or political pacts) that worked through formal and informal institutions to maintain democratic political stability. By 2002, this elite consensus was increasingly under pressure, particularly by those social movements and political elites regularly shut out from the governing consensus.

## **Democratic Consolidation**

Because of a variety of problems with the concept of "democratic consolidation," this dissertation deliberately avoids discussing whether Bolivia's democracy was, at any moment, "consolidated." Nevertheless, it is important to first briefly discuss this important conceptual concern in democratization studies.

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different: some set of (moderate) political elites dominates the political discourse at the exclusion of other actors (who may be either co-opted into, passively dissatisfied with, or actively opposed to the outcome).

Democratic consolidation most often refers to expectations that democracy will survive and that it is “immune to reversal” (Schedler 1998). Although the broader requirements for democratic consolidation have been hotly debated, most scholars agree that stability is at least one of the minimal conditions for democratic consolidation. But mere long-term endurance does not necessarily mean that a democracy is consolidated, since a semi-democratic system may also enjoy long-term stability (O’Donnell 1996). Thus, most definitions of democratic consolidation also expand upon minimal, procedural definitions of democracy to distinguish deeper forms of democracy from procedural façades or diminished subtypes (Collier and Levitsky 1997). As such, the term “consolidated democracy” is often used as a normative assessment of the quality of a specific democratic system. The use of qualitative, normative assessments of democratic cases makes the study of democratic consolidation controversial.

Many important discussions of democratic consolidation also include an attitudinal dimension. In their introduction to the volume *Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America*, Larry Diamond, Jonathan Hartlyn, and Juan Linz argue that democracy is consolidated when “the broad mass of the public and all significant actors ... believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for their society, better than any other realistic alternative” (1999, p. 4). Linz and Stepan put it more simply: democracy is consolidated when it becomes “the only game in town” (1996). The two authors’ commonly used definition focuses on five arenas: civil society, political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy, and economic society. Under this framework, a consolidated democracy requires certain behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional conditions: behaviorally, no actors try to overthrow the democratic system; attitudinally, there is broad public support for democratic procedures and institutions; constitutionally, all actors are subject to and accept the resolution of conflicts by democratic



institutions. Attitudinal dimensions, however, are difficult to assess, particularly in countries where political opinion survey data is limited. Even in widely recognized “consolidated” democracies, the relationship between popular attitudes and democracy may be extremely complex (Dahl 2000; Putnam, Pharr, and Dalton 2000). More importantly, it can become especially difficult in new democracies to distinguish between popular support for the government regime and the democratic system.

Studies that focus on the role of political elites emphasize the importance that elites agree to play by democratic “rules of the game” and demonstrate their willingness to accept electoral defeat (Higley and Gunther 1992). Democracy has fared better in countries where elite pacts were prevalent (especially during the transition) than in those where they were not. Here, we can assess the level of attitudinal support for democratic institutions: if political parties accept the legitimacy of the electoral process as the means to resolve or decide political conflict, then we may believe the democratic system to be consolidated. Of course, the nature of elite pacts has important consequences for democratic consolidation (Peeler 1998). Where elite pacts are exclusionary (that is, make it difficult for new social movements or political parties to participate in competitive politics), they can lead to problems of social legitimacy. Instead, democracy tends to fare better when elite pacts are more inclusive. But such approaches tell us little about why some elite pacts remain static and closed, while others are more dynamic and open. And, as the Bolivian case makes clear, attempts to open elite pacts to broader social inclusion may have destabilizing effects.

Lawrence Whitehead (2001) also sought an alternate way to address the question of the long-term survival of Bolivia’s democracy by using the concept of “viability” (that is, the

ability of a democracy to survive in its environment).<sup>19</sup> Whitehead's framework looks beyond consolidation to questions of what factors may threaten, in the short or long term, the continued existence of the democratic system. He argues that democracies may be consolidated but not viable; they may simply be "democracy by default" if actors have only temporarily accepted democratic norms only because non-democratic alternatives are not readily available (or not likely to lead to political victory). To be viable, democratic institutions must not only be observably employed, they must also enjoy widespread legitimacy and acceptance. An earlier (but similar) formulation by Michael Margolis (1979) makes clear that democratic viability also requires that political institutions of liberal democracy be capable of solving the critical problems of society. This requires strong links between institutions and civil society. The concept of viability is linked to a democracy's performance, its ability to resolve key social, economic, and political problems. To the extent that a democratic system is unable to resolve such problems, it will likely suffer a crisis of legitimacy that may undermine social support for the democratic process.

This dissertation does not argue that Bolivia's democratic system was at any given point either consolidated or viable. As Guillermo O'Donnell (1996) argued, attempts to qualify democracies as "consolidated" or "institutionalized" are often prone to methodological and theoretical pitfalls. Particularly in the Bolivian case, any claims about democratic either consolidation or breakdown would be highly contentious. Instead, I follow Sartori's (1970) advice and "shift the overarching concept" by moving questions of

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<sup>19</sup> Whitehead distinguishes viability from both consolidation and institutionalization. Like Eric Selbin (1999), he points out that much of the democratic consolidation literature emphasizes the institutionalization of democratic procedures. But a democratic system may be institutionalized, yet lack legitimacy or popular support for the broader democratic project. Such problems may include underlying socioeconomic inequalities, or other contextual problems that could lead to a democratic breakdown.

consolidation back into the heart of pluralist democratization theory. Thus, this dissertation argues that, since 1982, Bolivia has been undergoing a *democratization process*. This process has, of course, experienced different “phases” (even if these often blur into each other). One of these phases—the period between 1985 and 2002—demonstrated remarkable macro-institutional continuity: electoral calendars were institutionalized and elections went on as scheduled without interruption, those elections were internationally and locally considered free of fraud, losers accepted the outcome, and no actors attempted to overthrow the democratic system (in simple terms: no coups or other attempts to use extra-constitutional means as a path to power).

Since 2003, Bolivia’s democratization process has taken a different path. This dissertation thus seeks to accomplish two things:

1. Explain the macro-institutional stability in place from 1985 to 2002.
2. Explain the subsequent period of instability (or “political crisis”) that followed the events of October 2003.

Because of my interest in understanding Bolivia’s relative political stability from 1985 to 2002, like many comparative studies of new democracies, I focus on Bolivia’s political institutional framework. Yet it must be noted that my reference to Bolivia’s “stability” here only means that the Bolivian case was—consistently from 1985 to 2002—governed by the same set of political elites and under the same basic institutional framework. The term is therefore meant to differentiate the 1985-2002 period<sup>20</sup> from the earlier 1982-1985 (when the later elite consensus was not yet installed) and the later post-2003 (when the previous system

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<sup>20</sup> In Chapter 4 I further subdivide this period into two distinct institutional periods (1985-1997 and 1997-2002).

broke down) periods. The term is not meant as a normative assessment of the 1985-2002 period.

I refer to the post-2003 period as a period of instability or crisis because the previous elite consensus has decidedly broken down. First, because previously marginalized actors now participate in political life. Second, because these new actors have deliberately not accommodated themselves to previous institutional norms. More importantly, the current political crisis not only threatens the country's 1985-2002 institutional framework, but also jeopardizes Bolivia's *national* framework as well.

### **Democracy and Political Institutions**

Because procedural definitions of democracy focus on political elites and procedural norms, much of the literature focuses on the role and design of political institutions. Some researchers have even turned to issues of “constitutional engineering” (Sartori 1997; Norris 2004) or “getting the institutions right” (Diamond, et al 1999). Liberal democracy requires institutions that encourage moderated bargaining and limited veto powers that promote consensus building, while also ensuring effective governance, as well as state authority and the rule of law. Like much of that literature, I also adopt a “historical institutionalist” framework that defines institutions as “the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms, and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity” (Hall and Taylor 1996, p. 938). Such an approach considers both formal and informal institutions—the “procedural framework” within which political actors interact—and readily acknowledges that political outcomes are also influenced and bounded by historical and cultural factors.

A historical institutionalist perspective differs both from sociological and rational choice institutionalist perspectives. While sociological institutionalism broadly defines social

and political institutions, it tends to diminish the role of individual actors' choices by overemphasizing the effect of culture and other social customs. A disadvantage of sociological institutionalism is its inherent conservatism; while it can provide rich descriptions of a society's broader institutional framework, it is much less capable of explaining moments of social change. In contrast, rational choice institutionalism too narrowly focuses on the constraints placed on individual actors and assumes both individual rational maximizing behavior and pays less attention (historically) to how institutions themselves are shaped by history. That is, rational choice often ignores that individual choices, behavior, and interests are often shaped as much (if not more so) by previous historical experiences and cultural norms, as by purely abstract "rules of the game."

A historical institutionalist approach, consistent with pluralist and procedural theories of democracy, places political elites at the center and is also well suited to study periods of dramatic political change. Such an approach accepts some of rational choice's assumptions that individuals act strategically, but argues that individual interests, choices, and strategies are also influenced by their historical contexts (March and Olsen 1984), while still narrowly defining institutions. This approach is also particularly useful for the Bolivian case. First, because unlike in many other cases of democratic transition, Bolivian elites did not rewrite the democratic "rules of the game"—they accepted the existing constitutional statutes (the 1967 constitution) and adapted to them. Second, it allows this dissertation to consider the lingering effects of previous historical experience on elite political behavior. The Bolivian political system that has evolved since the transition to democracy in 1982 has been a product both of formal institutional rules and of historical legacies.

This dissertation focuses on four political institutions:

1. The electoral system.

2. The political party system.
3. The structure of executive-legislative relations.
4. Informal coalition-building rules.

Though each of these has independent effects, they also interact in complex ways. Of the four, only the electoral system is strictly a “formal” institution outlined in specific constitutional and legal provisions. The electoral system also significantly affects the other institutions, especially the political party system and the number and type of political parties. The least formal of these is the set of norms used by elites to craft governing coalitions.

### **Electoral Systems and Electoral Laws**

Elections are an essential feature of modern representative democracy. In many ways, “the democratic process is indeed encapsulated in elections and electing” (Sartori 1987, p. 86). Of course, we must beware of the “electoralist fallacy”—while elections are a necessary condition for modern democracy, they are not a sufficient condition (Linz and Stepan 1996). Nevertheless, elections allow citizens to (at the very least) choose between competing political elites. Electoral systems make voting possible by stipulating, among other things, the number and types of offices contested, how votes are cast, and the counting rules used to determine winners and losers. In large measure, democracy becomes the only game in town when all significant actors agree to use competitive elections—rather than other mechanisms (such as coups or revolts)—to decide who wields power in the polity. Implied, of course, is the stipulation that political actors agree to the specified electoral rules and that losers agree to respect outcomes determined by those rules.

The procedural model of democracy relies on elections to make popular self-government possible in large political systems (Dahl 1970; Dahl 1989; Sartori 1987; Sørensen

1998). While citizens of large, modern polities are no longer able to directly decide political issues, they can freely select their own representatives. Through competitive elections, citizens are able to influence public policy, articulate their interests, and hold government officials accountable (Manin 1997). Although democracies may also use referenda, ballot initiatives, or other mechanisms, this dissertation focuses on national-level elections.

The kind of electoral system used often reflects elementary foundations of the political system. Each counting rule aims to build a different type of majority or popular consensus. Political elites (or constitutional engineers) also design different counting rules with widely different proposed consequences in mind. Single-member district systems are often meant to build elective majorities, while proportional representation (PR) systems are frequently designed to increase minority representation. By dictating how votes are translated into seats, different electoral systems also affect both citizen and elite behavior by providing different incentive structures and strategic choices (Lijphart 1994; Cox 1997; Norris 2004).

Electoral systems also strongly affect other institutions, especially the political party system. Maurice Duverger (1954) was among the first to outline the relationship between electoral systems and party systems. According to “Duverger’s Law,” PR systems tend to correspond with multiparty systems, while simple majority (or first-past-the-post, FPTP) systems tend to correspond with two-party systems. Such a relationship is frequently explained by pointing to that FPTP systems have constraining effects on voters and a reductive effect on the number of parties (see Sartori 1994). By limiting the possibilities that smaller parties can win seats, FPTP systems encourage voters and elites to limit the number of ballot choices. In contrast, PR systems—especially those with large district magnitudes (number of seats per district) and lower thresholds (the minimum vote required to win a seat)—encourage a greater number of parties. Voters are more likely to expect their party to

win some representation; consequently, minority parties are more likely to campaign independently, rather than seek alliances. Rokkan and Lipset (1967) criticized this view, arguing that party systems are shaped more by historical legacies—especially cultural cleavages—than by electoral laws. Nevertheless, several “constitutional engineers” have deliberately worked to solve conflicts in new democracies with electoralist solutions derived (in large measure) from Duverger’s Law.<sup>21</sup>

### **Political Parties and Party Systems**

Modern representative democracy is impossible without political parties. And the health of a democracy is often associated with the health of its political party system, in particular the degree to which parties and party systems are “institutionalized.” Political parties link elites to voters, organize and articulate public political discourse, help make representatives accountable, and allow for challenges to political authority. Political parties are also naturally consistent with democracy, perhaps even with “classical” democracy.<sup>22</sup> Of course, modern, institutionalized political parties are more highly organized and differentiated than the simpler popular “factions” of bygone eras. In contrast to other political arrangements, electoral democracy allows citizens to choose which elites will govern

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<sup>21</sup> For prominent examples of constitutional engineering, see Norris 2004), Reilly 2001, Reynolds 2002, Cox 1997, Sartori 1997, Lijphart and Groffman 1984, and Lijphart and Groffman 1986.

<sup>22</sup> M. I. Finley (1985) and Bernard Manin (1997) point out that the Athenian social elite played an important role in Athenian democracy. Demagogues (such as Pericles), who trained in rhetoric, frequently spoke on behalf of some particular faction of supporters in the assembly. Although any Athenian citizen was in theory able to voice a proposal before the Assembly, these specially trained orators often served as *de facto* representatives. While neither Finley nor Manin would consider Athenian factions are “political parties,” their description and analysis suggests that classical such “factions” (which have evolved into “political parties”) are a natural part of political democracy.



on their behalf. Political parties allow voters to organize behind those elites they believe will best represent them and their interests.

Because an institutionalized party system is indispensable for modern, representative democracy, significant attention has been paid to the development of stable, institutionalized party systems in new democracies (Lipset 2000; Sartori 1994; Lijphart and Groffman 1986; Lijphart and Waisman 1996). A party system is “institutionalized” if parties are more than temporary or personal electoral vehicles. Institutionalized parties are linked to—and legitimately represent—important social groups and constituencies. Thus, they should coincide with the significant social cleavages and retain relatively stable bases of electoral support. Party systems also give voters intellectual shortcuts. That is, voters should be able to identify the basic policy tendencies of political parties (which helps make parties accountable) and—at the very least—know who their core leaders are and have some idea of what their policy orientations are. If parties are not institutionalized, if they are merely empty labels used haphazardly during elections, then voters must essentially vote randomly without being able to clearly articulate their preferences.

Political parties also serve an important socialization function within democracy. They train and prepare potential government teams. Unlike other civic organizations, political parties deliberately seek to place their members into government positions—that is, they compete in democratic elections. When in power, political parties are expected to translate the party’s program into government policies. Because voters can hold parties accountable for their management of public institutions, political parties have incentives to nominate capable and responsible candidates. Thus, parties spend considerable time recruiting and training candidates and other figures who can assume political authority if elected.

Because party systems also reflect and articulate a society's social and political cleavages, the underlying social structure has a strong independent effect on the formation of political parties and party systems. Here, a society's historical legacies can have powerful effects—especially in new democracies. Political parties were common throughout Latin America, even in countries with little or no history of democracy or competitive elections. In such countries, the traditions of *caudillo*-led or populist social movements can play a powerful role.<sup>23</sup> The ability of these parties to adapt to democratic electoral rules has proven crucial in the consolidation and health of new democracies.

Additionally, political parties have an impact on the political process between elections. Competitive elections produce both “winners” (the government) and “losers” (the opposition). When they agree to play by the electoral rules, political parties must concede the right of the winners to exercise political power. The relationship between political parties—both between members of any multi-party coalition and between government and opposition parties—is crucial for the day-to-day operations of government. Good inter-party relationships are also essential for long-term democratic political stability. In large part, how political parties interact is shaped by the constitutional structure, especially those regulating executive-legislative relations.

### **Executive-Legislative Relations**

Modern democratic systems make clear distinctions between executive and legislative powers. Even in parliamentary systems, where the prime minister is technically a member of parliament, voters recognize that the prime minister and his or her cabinet wield executive

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<sup>23</sup> For a broader discussion of the historical legacy of political populism and the *caudillo* tradition in Bolivia, see Chapter 3.

power (that is, the execution of government policy). The relationship between the executive and the legislature can vary significantly—both between presidential and parliamentary systems and within them. These differences are often stipulated by constitutional structures, but they are also affected by the electoral system, the party system, and coalition-building norms. Like electoral systems, the norms regulating executive-legislative relations often reflect underlying assumptions within a political community about the nature of democracy. The two basic types of relationships—presidentialism and parliamentarism—also stem from different views of democracy.

Parliamentary systems closely bind the executive and legislature and reflect a “populistic” theory of democracy, which identifies democracy with popular sovereignty and the majority rule principle (Dahl 1956). Popular sovereignty is reflected in the election of a representative assembly. Executives (prime ministers) are not elected by direct popular vote, but rather by parliament—and the ability of parliament to call for a vote of confidence also makes parliamentary executives dependent on the legislature. Although parliamentary systems tend to focus executive power in the cabinet, rather than the legislature as a whole, parliamentary cabinets are usually more collegial and spread decision-making beyond the prime minister (Lijphart 1999).

In contrast, presidential systems keep executive and legislative powers separate and reflect a “Madisonian” theory of democracy, which reflects an effort to restrain majority (and minority) tyranny by facilitating compromise between competing interests (Dahl 1956). Presidential systems hold separate elections for the executive and legislature, who may each represent different competing social groups or interests. Thus, unlike in parliamentary systems, divided government is a very real possibility in presidential systems. Although executive power is centralized within the chief executive, the legislature retains its

independent base of support and can check the president. Similarly, presidents can exercise veto power and restrain legislative power. The ability of different political parties to work together is therefore critical in presidential systems.

Juan Linz (1990; 1994) argued that presidential systems are inherently less stable than parliamentary systems. Linz's critique focused on the two most prominent features of presidential systems: dual legitimacy and temporal rigidity. Separate elections for the executive and legislature give each competing claims to legitimacy. Since each is popularly elected, "no democratic principle can decide who represents the will of the people" (Linz 1994, p. 7). Similarly, because presidential systems do not allow for votes of confidence and tend to limit terms of office, they are less flexible than parliamentary systems. Popular and effective governments cannot extend their mandate, while voters are stuck with unpopular and ineffective governments until the next election. When presidents and legislatures disagree, dual legitimacy and temporal rigidity can collide dangerously.

Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach argue that conflict between executive and legislative powers "systematically contributes to impasses and democratic breakdowns" (1993, p. 19). Link Linz, they argue that the failure of presidential democracy explains why democracy has failed to take root in Latin America. Historically, conflicts between presidents and assemblies have been solved by the military, acting as *poder moderador* (the "moderating power").

O'Donnell (1994) criticized presidential democracy for producing executives with authoritarian tendencies who claim to rule in the name of the people and who attack the legislature. Nevertheless, most new democracies have adopted some type of presidential system—especially in Latin America, where no country has yet adopted a parliamentary system. A further problem is that many new democracies have adopted PR electoral systems

for their legislature, which tend to increase the number of parties and make presidents less effective.

Still, differences in the design and operation among presidential systems are significant and can affect how presidents and assemblies interact (Shugart and Carey 1992; Nohlen and Fernández 1998). These relationships are deeply affected by other institutional factors. Mark Jones (1995) demonstrates that democracy fared better when electoral laws provided executives with majorities or near-majorities. Electoral systems intervene in the working of executive-legislative relations and affect them as much as do formal proscriptions separating their powers. Electoral systems also offer different incentives for building inter-party coalitions, which have profound effects on the relationship between presidents and assemblies.

### **Coalition-Building Norms**

Coalition-building norms are informal, commonly accepted codes of behavior that specify how different political actors (e.g. political parties) can collaborate. Although liberal democracy relies on political parties that compete for power in elections, coalitions allow rival parties to reduce some of the zero-sum antagonism of electoral politics by coming together to build policy consensus. Because one of the key elements of democracy is majority rule, multiparty coalitions are useful for producing majoritarian governments that can also come together through deliberation and agreement.

While formal institutions—particularly electoral systems—cannot make coalitions inevitable, they can make them more likely by providing incentive structures that encourage cooperation between rival political elites. Electoral systems that promote scorched-earth

antagonistic campaign strategies limit the possibility that political elites will work cooperatively after elections.

Coalition-building norms may be highly institutionalized and broadly based, such as in “consociational” systems (Lijphart 1984; 1999). Consociational power-sharing agreements between elites cartels are credited with stable politics in societies with deep social cleavages, such as Austria, Belgium, and The Netherlands. A danger of consociationalism, however, is that it can lock power-sharing agreements into place for too long. This is especially true if cleavage structures change and new groups do not have access to political power. In Latin America, consociational agreements in Colombia and Venezuela were credited with preventing authoritarianism. But bipartisan agreements in both countries excluded new political movements that emerged in the 1970s—the recent democratic crises in both countries have been partly blamed on these same elite consociational agreements (McCoy 1999; González and Cardenas 1998).

Other types of coalition-building norms may be narrower and less static, such as the ad hoc governing coalitions common in parliamentary systems. Because prime ministers are elected by the legislature, multiparty coalitions are necessary whenever no single party wins a simple majority. Of course, different parties only need to agree to vote together to elect a prime minister; there is no reason why parties cannot subsequently return to the role of opposition. Governing coalitions in which two or more different parties agree to share and exercise power together are nevertheless the norm in parliamentary systems. In such coalitions, the various member parties agree to share cabinet and other ministerial positions. In many cases, coalitions tend to be fairly stable and predictable, with some parties commonly joining together. Coalition governments have been relatively common in Latin

America, though their character and frequency across different countries is heavily affected by their electoral and party systems (Deheza 1998).

### **Beyond Historical Institutionalism**

Each of the above institutions is, of course, central to understanding procedural democratic politics. Yet such institutional frameworks operate within a broader cultural context and interact with them in complex ways. Historical institutionalists have long recognized that the cultural contexts within which actors use institutions affects actors' choices, strategies, and even interests. But the relationship can also work in the opposite direction: institutional engineering, by altering incentive structures, may also prompt changes to the cultural context itself. Since democratic institutions are often assumed to operate within a nation-state, understanding how national imaginaries are constructed—and reconstructed—is equally important.

### **Democracy and “the Nation”**

While most of the comparative democratization literature focuses on the institutional arrangements necessary for democracy, these often assume a nation-state model and downplay the importance of the nation and its relation to liberal democracy. The dominance of the nation-state model as the analytical framework for comparative studies of democracy has led to conceptual confusion, with the terms “nation” and “state” frequently used interchangeably (Connor 1978). But while the state is a legal, institutional, and bureaucratic apparatus, the nation is substantially different. And though some nation-states are commonly perceived as culturally homogeneous (e.g. Japan, Portugal, Iceland), most nation-states are in reality comprised of a multicultural, diverse citizenry. Yet because the nation-state model is

dominant, states pursue (whether explicitly or implicitly) policies meant to reinforce a common national community. This means that as states—including liberal democratic states—seek to maintain social cohesion by managing social conflict, they seek to reinforce social consensus over both the political and the national.

Comparative studies of democracy, of course, have not been silent on the issue. The well-known consociational model developed by Arend Lijphart (1980) addressed the issue of democracy in “plural societies”. Drawing principally from Western European experience, Lijphart’s consociational model tends to emphasize social, rather than ethnic cleavages. Some recent studies that focus on cases from the developing world—particularly those in Benjamin Reilly (2001) and Andrew Reynolds (2002)—have addressed the issue of democracy in “divided societies” and the struggle to consolidate democracy in polities with deep ethnic cleavages. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) do draw attention to the national question when they argue that democratic consolidation requires widespread social agreement about the legitimacy and scope of the *polis* and the identity of the *demos*. But their argument gravitates towards the issue of “stateness” (rather than “nationness”) as their dictum “no state, no democracy” makes clear. Essentially, Linz and Stepan argue that the question of the political community is necessary for the state, and only indirectly for democracy. While accepting their argument about the fundamental importance of a consolidated state apparatus for democratic consolidation, I expand upon their formulation of the importance of a widespread agreement about the nature and composition of the *demos*.

Historically, democracy and nationalism were closely related. The first wave of nationalist movements that emerged after the French Revolution was also a democratic



wave,<sup>24</sup> based on the principle of popular sovereignty. Conceptually, the two terms are also fundamentally similar: both are horizontally egalitarian communities. There are, however, two key differences between democracy and the nation. First, while democracy contains an implicit prescription for government (a method by which political control is exercised), the nation does not; the latter is limited solely to delineating membership in the political community. Second, although we believe we can easily recognize the cultural character of the national community, several nationalism scholars—most notably Ernest Gellner (1983), Benedict Anderson (1991), and Eric Hobsbawm (1992)—have pointed to the constructed nature of national cultural communities. Other modernization theorists of nationalism have similarly shown the relatively recent emergence of nations and nationalism, and outlined nationalism’s close relationship to political and industrial modernization.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the attention by political culture scholars as diverse as Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), Robert Putnam (1994), and Howard Wiarda (2001) to the “civic” values necessary for democracy suggests culture may be an important component of democracy. Both sets of scholarship call into question the very premise of a clear-cut distinction between nation and *demos*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In fact, the first wave of nationalist movements coincides with Huntington’s “first wave” of democracy (1991). Each subsequent democratic “wave” has also coincided with a resurgence of nationalism: the wave of democracy following the Second World War coincided with the anti-colonialist movements in Africa and Asia; the third wave of democracy coincided with the nationalist movements in post-Communist Europe. The pattern suggests that, to some extent, democratic and nationalist waves are (on some level) conceptually linked.

<sup>25</sup> Other modernization theorists of nationalism include social communication theorists such as Deutsch (1953), Rustow (1969), and Eisenstadt and Rokkan (1973); economic theorists such as Hechter (1975) and Hroch (1985); and political-ideological theorists such as Breuilly (1982), Giddens (1981), and Brass (1991).

<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, the two are etymologically similar, though unrelated. Though most democratic theorists accept *demos* to mean “a people,” Aristotle explicitly defined *demos* as “the poor.” The Greek word for “a people” is *ethnos*, which more commonly denotes a cultural and historic community, with little emphasis on its political

Conceptually, the Nation and *demos* can be reconciled through Anderson's (1991) definition of nations as "imagined political communities"—a definition that easily includes democracy as a type of imagined political community. Critical of Gellner's (1983) formulation of constructed nationalism, Anderson makes clear that "imagined" nations are neither "false" nor "ungenuine". Individuals have sincere, authentic attachment to their national community, a community with very real, tangible cultural foundations. Like a nation, a democratic community is limited, sovereign, and horizontally egalitarian. It is limited, because membership in the community is not universal, but specifically delimited by law. It is sovereign, because the community does not recognize any superior authority (God, church, or king) over itself. And it is horizontally egalitarian, because all citizens are considered political equals. A democratic community is also imagined in the same way as Anderson's nation. In all but the smallest of democratic communities (the village or committee) individual members may never meet each other, but nevertheless develop strong bonds of loyalty to each because, just as in nations, "in the mind of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1991, p. 6). Finally, just as a nation requires a set of myths, rituals, and heroes that form a foundation for the cultural community, so do democracies.<sup>27</sup>

If we accept the nation-state as the current model for sovereign political community, a deeper understanding of the nature and development of national communities is instructive. I adopt Anderson's framework not because it is the most accurate (there are,

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organization. The Latin term for such a community is *natio* (though often used contemptuously towards non-Romans, who were referred to as *civitas*).

<sup>27</sup> Can we even think of a democratic state that does not have a pantheon of "founding fathers" and other heroes immortalized in public monuments, a historicist understanding of the past and the struggle to forge the community and protect it from others, or periodic rituals to honor the national symbols (the flag, the constitution, the house of parliament)?

after all, important criticisms mounted by other nationalism scholars), but because it is the most malleable. Because Anderson frames the nation as a type of imagined community,<sup>28</sup> he implicitly creates a conceptual category that can include other political communities. Here, I would like to briefly sketch out four similarities between democracy and the type of imagined community Anderson describes. First, the democratic community includes mechanisms and institutions that socialize its members into the civic values necessary for communal life. This is done through the educational system, museums, public monuments, and periodic rituals. Second, the modern democratic community is routinely recreated in “homogeneous, empty time” through modern communications media. Perhaps it is no coincidence that one of the fundamental liberal democratic rights is freedom of the press. The idea that modern imagined communities are made possible by print capitalism—especially the novel and the newspaper, which allowed citizens to imagine themselves as part of a larger community—is particularly poignant for democracies, where “pop culture” (to the novel and newspaper we now add radio, television, and the internet) routinely reinforce both the community’s scope and its values. Third, in a very general sense, the role of “public intellectuals” in both types of communities is remarkably similar: they played a vanguard role in establishing the polity and continue to mobilize the masses in support of the community and its institutions. Finally, and most importantly, like the nation, the democratic community cannot exist until it has resolved the issue of who constitute “the people”—the very community that will exercise political autonomy. In fact, the struggle to determine who is

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<sup>28</sup> Anderson presents modern national communities as similar to pre-modern religious and imperial communities (see Anderson 1991, p. 5-7). Clearly, Anderson’s conceptual definition of “nation” is not operationally constricted, since it frames the nation as a species of the broader conceptual category, the imagined political community.

and who is not a member of the community is the first political question any nation or democratic community must attempt to resolve.

Remarkably, most theoretical discussions of democracy seem to take an already existing *demos* for granted, or at best treat it in an abstract form, with little attention to how some collection of individuals come to see themselves as a political community. This “*demos* question” is scarcely addressed, even among seminal accounts. David Held’s (1996) survey of competing democratic theories is surprisingly silent on the issue. Giovanni Sartori’s (1987) analytically rich *Theory of Democracy Revisited* points out the conceptual ambiguity of *demos*, but then hastily moves on to discuss other areas of democratic theory. Robert Dahl (1982; 1989), one of the few pluralist theorists of democracy to press the importance of resolving this “shadow theory of democracy” nevertheless does not forcefully pursue the origins of how any group of individuals come to accept that they are a political community. In part, pluralist theorists like Sartori and Dahl move past the *demos* question because they assume that political communities are not homogeneous, assuming instead both heterogeneous pluralism and interest-driven rationalism. Nevertheless, defining a polity’s *demos* is of paramount importance; how can any group of individuals govern themselves democratically if they have not first agreed that they are a political community, that they should collectively govern themselves?

Non-pluralist theorists similarly pay scant attention to the *demos* question. Theorists of participatory and communitarian democracy, while emphasizing the bonds of communal attachment, do not clearly articulate a theory or framework for how the community comes into existence. Some non-pluralist theorists, like Carole Pateman (1988) and Charles W. Mills (1997), have argued that the political theory underpinning liberal democracy contains unstated assumptions about the nature of the political community, assumptions with

important implications for gender and race relations. Yet even such criticisms do not go far enough to address the *demos* question as a fundamental component of democratic theory. Critiques of racial inequalities within a political community still presuppose existing racial or cultural groups, without clearly identifying how such groups are constructed. Critiques of gender inequalities, likewise, still presuppose an existing political community. It may be that French women are discriminated against in their political society—but why are they still “French” women? At heart is the simple issue of how any political community is constructed or imagined.

Of course, the national communities that new democracies inherit were forged during an earlier (non-democratic) period in history. This means that the democratic principle of popular sovereignty must be grafted onto an already existing national imaginary. Thus, most democratic theorists who deal with the *demos* question frequently (like Sartori) treat it as an abstract entity—the *demos* as a universal concept. But the very process of democratizing “France” may reintroduce the question of who the “French” are. We see this today as France wrestles with this question in the face of its growing Muslim population. We treat moments of democratization as “revolutions” that reshape the political, social, and economic fabrics of society—why not their imaginaries as well? A modern Bolivian national imaginary was in place before the country’s transition to democracy in 1982 (see Chapter 3). Centered on the 1952 National Revolution, this national imaginary (or “discourse”) shaped Bolivia’s political experience and was used by civilian and military regimes alike, since 1952, to maintain state legitimacy and authority. Bolivia’s democratization did more than merely graft democratic institutions onto this imaginary—it introduced a new, competing liberal-pluralist political discourse.

If nations are constructed or imagined, so are democratic communities. Few would argue that democracy is a “natural” form of human political organization in the way that kinship might be. Despite its historical roots in Classical Greek and Medieval Italian city-states, modern democracy is a recent phenomenon going back (at the most) little more than a century. More importantly, all existing democracies were clearly constructed and established at some very specific point in time by some particular set of individuals. Here, discussions of how modern nations emerged are instructive. Both in European and New World contexts, new political elites challenged established authorities (the monarchic court or the colonial empire) by appealing to newly emerging, national identities. In short, modern representative states were constructed alongside the new national communities such states were meant to govern—the origin of the one tells us much about the origin of the other.

While other nationalism scholars like Anthony Smith (1986) and Liah Greenfeld (1992) argue that nations have deep historical, cultural roots, such claims are difficult to extend into post-colonial contexts such as Latin America, where national boundaries were arbitrary and cultural legacies more suspect. Of course, such critics of the imagined communities theory of nationalism do not discount the role played by elites in the construction of a national identity. They merely emphasize the importance of past historical cultural legacies on evolving national identities. Greenfeld’s seminal account includes a case study of the United States, a multicultural post-colonial nation (and an example of “open-civic” nationalism). But Smith’s emphasis on the ethnic origins of nations is somewhat problematic. While Smith’s theory does not ignore the recent birth of post-colonial nationalisms, his approach still emphasizes their roots in older ethnic identities.

While “perennialists” like Smith and Greenfeld see nations as developing slowly, over centuries, Anderson and other “modernists” see them developing much more quickly

and recently. One modernist study of nationalism by John Kelley and Martha Kaplan (2001) goes further, arguing that nationalism (especially in the post-colonial world) emerged from the period following the world wars (that is, nationalism is an artifact of the twentieth century). Without discounting older incidents of nationalism and nationalist movements around the world, Kelley and Kaplan (like Anderson) suggest that nation-states were in large measure a product of international political forces that emphasized the nation as the focus of sovereign political power. As with Anderson, Kelley and Kaplan's emphasis on post-colonial nationalism in Asia (Indonesia and Fiji, respectively) led them to consider the (quite conscious) construction of national, political identities.

The extent to which the nation became the agent of self-determination has clear implications for democratic theory. Clearly, the question of how the national community was to be constituted—especially its membership and territoriality—is a political question, with immediate implications for the subsequent formation of a polity. Anderson's framework of nations as imagined political communities also suggests that, if the national imaginary is a continual, ongoing process, the national imaginary can be deconstructed and reimagined over time. And if the national imaginary is originally constructed by elite discourse, one could expect that a new dominant political elite could significantly restructure (or even replace) that imaginary. One could also expect that as the political process is opened to greater popular participation, the national imaginary is further opened to deconstruction and reimagining.

I suggest that democracies are in a perpetual state of "reimagining" because of the nature of the democratic political community. While we more easily associate the construction of national communities in relation to some "other" identity, sociologists have pointed to popular imaginaries—in discussing populism—as self-referenced in relation to a

shifting “internal periphery” (Arditi 2005) of democratic politics.<sup>29</sup> If a polity allows open discussion of political issues, one of these issues must be the scope of the community itself. This, however, makes democracy potentially dangerous to existing national political communities. I want to be clear here: I am not suggesting that democracy should be avoided in order to protect existing national communities, but simply that careful attention to how democracy may open the question of the community itself—the *demos* question—for contestation. I also suggest that nations themselves both potentially reopened for interpretation by democratizing elites and can be reimagined during moments of sharp political upheaval. The combination of the two supports the conceptualization of democracy as a dynamically imagined community. In this sense, attention to the historical evolution of Bolivian nationalism and the polity’s “national imaginary” is essential (see Chapter 3).

### **Research Design and Methods**

This dissertation is a case study of Bolivia’s experience as an electoral democracy from 1985 to 2006. The study covers six general elections (1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2002, and 2005) and focuses on electoral political competition. Single-case studies are useful, despite their limitations, particularly when studying exceptional (or “outlier”) cases that do not easily fit within the literature (Ragin 1987; Rueschemeyer 1991; Ragin and Becker 1992). The Bolivian case is exceptional in two ways: First, its institutional design of “parliamentarized presidentialism” is a unique institutional hybrid that does not fit within regime typologies and merits closer scrutiny. Second, its historical experience includes a social revolutionary

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<sup>29</sup> Arditi also uses the term “democratic imaginary” when describing the phenomenon of how populist movements help shape popular imaginaries in counter-position to various “others” (e.g. traditional elites, foreign capitalists, or other “anti-national” elements).



process, which sets the case apart from its regional neighbors. As an understudied case in comparative democratization literature, a study that explores the effects of these two factors—institutional design and historical legacies—on Bolivia’s democratic experience is an important contribution for understanding this unique case and placing it within a broader comparative framework.

This dissertation also employs a “within-case” research design in which time becomes a variable for comparative analysis (Collier 1997). Aside from the analysis of historical legacies consistent with a historical institutionalist perspective, this dissertation also divides Bolivia’s recent democratic experience into three “cases” for comparisons based on three distinct “institutional periods” (outlined in Chapter 4). Using these three “cases” allows for control of various contextual variables in much the same way as a most similar systems research design would allow (Przeworski 1987). Thus, the relevant independent variables—those associated with differences in institutional design—stand out.

### **The Bolivian Case**

Here I wish to briefly sketch why Bolivia stands out as a unique case among Latin America’s new democracies. As mentioned earlier, the country’s remarkable political stability from 1985 through 2002 stood in contrast to the political turbulence that characterized several of the region’s new democracies—especially in the Central Andes. While Bolivia is in many ways similar to Ecuador and Peru (in socioeconomic indicators, in demographic and ethnic divisions, in historical experience, in involvement with the US-led war on drugs), the country’s post-transition experience was markedly different. Peru’s democracy ended abruptly in 1992 after president Alberto Fujimori closed down parliament, purged the judiciary, and suspended the constitution. Ecuador’s democracy has remained troubled, with

the forced removal of two presidents from office, the brief kidnapping of another by the military, and several military and popular revolts. In contrast, Bolivia has not had a powerful executive who so openly abrogated the constitution (like Peru). And though the 2003 popular uprising that overthrew Sánchez de Lozada resembled the 2000 Ecuador popular uprising that overthrew Jamil Mahuad, the results were substantially different—no junta assumed power during the transition, which flowed constitutionally to the sitting vice president, Carlos Mesa, after the parliament accepted the president's resignation.

Prior to the third wave of democracy, Bolivia was remarkably similar to its Andean neighbors. All three had a long history of military interventionism, populism, and weak political institutions. Within the broader South American context, Bolivia stood (alongside Paraguay) as a least likely case for democratization. Yet Bolivia democratized before Chile (1991), Brazil (1985), Uruguay (1984), and Argentina (1983). Ecuador and Peru transitioned to democracy earlier (both in 1979), but neither was able to establish a stable pattern of institutionalized party politics. Peru, which has the most institutionalized party system of the three, saw the first major third wave reversal in 1990 after both APRA and AP virtually disintegrated. In contrast, Bolivia's highly fractured party system had by 1985 consolidated around three major parties: the MNR, ADN, and MIR. Meanwhile, Ecuador's party system continued to further splinter almost exponentially. Finally, while "anti-system" populist discontent eroded political institutions in other countries, the Bolivian populist parties (Condepa and UCS) were integrated into electoral democracy and did not seriously threaten the liberal-pluralist democratic consensus. All this in midst of two of the most far-reaching structural reform projects of post-1980s Latin America: the neoliberal economic shock therapy of 1985 and the 1993-1997 Sánchez de Lozada political and economic reforms. What explains this Bolivian exceptionalism?

Like the platypus, “parliamentarized presidentialism” (Bolivia’s hybrid institutional design) rests uneasily within institutional taxonomies.<sup>30</sup> This study of Bolivia’s democratic experience explores the relationship between its unique institutional design and its democratic political stability from 1985 through 2002, and its current prospects for continued democratization. Because Bolivia’s political institutions underwent considerable change—or “engineering”—in the 1990s, a comparative study of parliamentarized presidentialism is possible by employing a within-case approach that examines how changes in institutional design affected Bolivia’s political stability. Thus, my driving research question involves the relationship between the change from a list proportional representation (list-PR) to a mixed-member proportional (MMP)<sup>31</sup> electoral system on how Bolivia’s parliamentarized presidentialism operated and, consequently, on the country’s political stability.

## Research Questions

This study explores three general research questions:

1. What explains Bolivia’s institutional democratic stability from 1985 to 2002?
2. What explains the current institutional crisis?
3. What is the conceptual relationship between the political community (or the Nation) and democracy and democratic stability?

The first research question is, of course, methodologically difficult to test, since factors one believes contribute to stability may, in fact, be products of stability, or may both

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<sup>30</sup> An aquatic, venomous, duck-billed mammal that lays eggs, the platypus has been an outlier in animal taxonomies since its discovery. Bolivia’s “parliamentary presidential” system is outlined in Chapter 4.

<sup>31</sup> This electoral system is also sometimes referred to as the Additional Member System (AMS).

be product and reinforcement mechanism. In short, it is much more difficult to explain stasis than kinetics, especially in social science. Yet despite the current crisis, an understanding of how Bolivia had such a lengthy period of institutional democratic stability—especially one that emerged from a tumultuous democratic transition process—is instructive. It is quite possible that Bolivia’s unique system of parliamentarized presidentialism enabled stable, moderate, multiparty bargaining strategies that allowed democracy to endure despite socioeconomic problems (poverty, underdevelopment, ethnic cleavages, etc.). If so, the basic institutional framework of parliamentarized presidentialism outlined in Chapter Three may yet have something to offer as a model for institutional designers.

The second research question, though easier to test, has methodological limitations as well. First, it is possible that the very institutions that facilitated stability may have, over time, eroded confidence in democratic institutions. Such a question is difficult to answer, however, since survey data on Bolivian political attitudes is limited, making hypothesis testing about attitudinal behavior difficult. Second, it is possible the current crisis was the product of a series of converging factors, some institutional or systemic and others more circumstantial or contingent. Politics, after all, is comprised not only of institutional norms, but also of individual actors, whose choices can have dramatic consequences. Nevertheless, a careful understanding of how Bolivia’s comparatively stable democracy devolved into acute political crisis is instructive. As previous works by Arturo Valenzuela (1978) and Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1978) have shown, studies of how democracies break down can tell us much about the nature of democracy and the dynamics of the democratization process. Lessons from the Bolivian case may prove useful for understanding crises in other newly democratic countries, especially in Latin America.

Of particular interest is the effect that changes in institutional design during the mid-1990s may have had on democratic stability. Two reforms meant to deepen Bolivia's democracy significantly changed the polity's institutional design:

1. The municipalization of the state (that is, the devolution of power away from a highly centralized state towards local governments).

2. The adoption of an MMP electoral system for legislative elections.

The 1994 Popular Participation Law (LPP) established local, democratically elected municipal governments nation-wide, creating new expectations for local politics. Similarly, the change away from a simple list-PR electoral system for the lower legislative chamber (the House of Deputies) to an MMP system where approximately half of the lower chamber is elected from plurality-winner single-member districts also encouraged a local dimension to electoral politics. Thus, this study pays careful attention to the role played by political institutions (especially the interaction of electoral systems and party systems) in the current crisis.

Lastly, my study on Bolivia's periods of democratic stability and crisis has led me to consider the importance of the political community as a concept in democratic theory. Specifically, this study considers whether a common social agreement on the scope and nature of the polity, its membership, and its purpose is necessary for liberal representative democracy. The emergence of a real secessionist threat suggests that basic social consensus on the existence of a "Bolivian" polity had broken down.<sup>32</sup> This led me to consider the

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<sup>32</sup> Threats of secession have recently come from two directions: The first includes rhetoric by some Aymara indigenous leaders (such as Felipe Quispe) that proclaims an indigenous polity, or *Kollasuyu* (the name of the southern section of the Inca empire). The second includes resurgent regionalist political rhetoric from the lowlands (especially the departments of Santa Cruz and Tarija) that reflects conflicting political and economic interests between the Andean and lowland regions. Many observers are skeptical of the probability of an open

importance of “civic nationalism” as a necessary component for a democratic political community.<sup>33</sup> An exploration of the relationship between nationalism and democracy also implies, of course, considerations on the historical-institutional mechanisms that re-enforce social consensus, as well as how such consensus breaks down. Here, the implications from the Bolivian case may be the most startling: What if democratization implies a social reformulation or deconstruction of the national question? If so, then the challenges facing democracy in societies with ethnic, regional, and socioeconomic cleavages may be even more substantial than previously anticipated.

Finally, a focus on nationalism and the existence of deep and historical cultural cleavages in Bolivian society lead to a consideration of the relationship between regionalism and political institutions. If social cleavages have long histories, why are they more salient at some points in history, but less so in others? Similarly, if nations are “imagined,” can we also conceptualize cultural cleavages as similarly “imagined”? This is as relevant to the rise of *katarista* indigenous movements in the Andean highlands as it is of the new so-called *media luna* regionalist movements of the eastern lowlands. The findings in this dissertation suggest that, while cultural cleavages may have always existed, they became increasingly salient and polarized after the institutional engineering of the 1990s.

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secessionist threat that could dismember Bolivia. Nevertheless, the sharp increase in regionalist rhetoric (which often does openly mention secession) suggests that a real secessionist threat is not beyond the realm of possibility.

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of “civic nationalism” compared to other forms of nationalism, see Greenfeld 1992.

## **Data and Methods**

The method used in this dissertation is primarily qualitative and descriptive, though relying on supplementary quantitative electoral data and analysis. Though this study explores the legacies of past historical experience (see Chapter 3), the bulk of the dissertation is devoted to a study of electoral politics in Bolivia between 1985 and 2005. As such, the data used in Chapters 5-8 rely primarily on election data from the country's six presidential and parliamentary elections in the period under study.

Though grouped into three institutional periods (see Chapter 4), each of the elections in this study is treated separately in Chapters 5-7. Sections dealing with each election are broken down into four main components:

1. A brief description of the parties and presidential candidates.
2. A narrative and analysis of the electoral campaign.
3. A snapshot overview of election results, both nationally and regionally.
4. An account of the government formation process that followed the election results.

Descriptions of the party lists that participated in each election include information about their ideological orientation and any pre-electoral alliances. A brief characterization of the Bolivian party system is provided in Chapter 4.

The narrative descriptions of campaign processes are drawn primarily from archive materials provided by the Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia (CEDIB) in Cochabamba. The materials are selected newspaper clippings drawn from various Bolivian periodicals. These are augmented with information from other primary and secondary sources. The narratives are not meant to be exhaustive descriptions of the electoral campaigns, but to simply to provide a rough outline of the general tone, rhetoric, and

strategies employed by the major protagonists. When appropriate, references to direct sources are provided.

There are some methodological limitations with the CEDIB materials. Materials for the 1985 and 1989 elections predate CEDIB's more complete monthly *30 Días de Noticias* dossiers. The 1985 and 1989 archive materials are also heavily restricted to the period immediately before and after 6 August (the date when presidents traditionally assume office), and include only the last few weeks of each pre-electoral campaign. The 1989 materials, however, include a dossier published soon after the election (CEDIB 1989), which contains summary information about the electoral campaigns. The 1993, 1997, and 2002 materials, in contrast, cover a broader historical range that extends several months before each election. The later materials also are drawn from a broader sample of different periodicals—the 1985 and 1989 materials rely primarily on Cochabamba's *Los Tiempos*. Additionally, the 2002 and 2005 campaign data include materials drawn from online editions of various Bolivian newspapers. For a complete list of the newspaper titles, see the Appendix. Finally, while there does not seem to be a problem of selection bias in the materials provided by CEDIB, the materials are clearly not exhaustive, but rather a sample of news materials from the historical periods in question.

The analyses of election results focus on the relative position of parties and candidates by both seats and votes, their relative changes from the previous election, as well as disaggregated information by regions (departments and sub-department units) and city-urban voting differences. The National Electoral Court provided all the election data used in this dissertation, which was also kind enough to provide disaggregated data not normally publicly available. Particularly useful for the statistical analysis in Chapter 8, this data was disaggregated to the provincial and municipal level, as well as broken down for 1997, 2002,



and 2005 elections for comparisons between plurinominal and uninominal votes by SMD (for an explanation of Bolivia's electoral system, see Chapter 4). The latter allowed test for cross-voting patterns.

Information on government formation also comes from a combination of primary (such as CEDIB archive materials) and secondary sources. Such narratives are meant to illustrate the kind of coalition-bargaining norms in which Bolivian political parties were engaged between 1985 and 2002 (the 2005 election made coalition bargaining unnecessary). Of course, coalition negotiations between political elites are mostly private—more precisely, non-public—affairs, leading to potential errors from observation bias. Yet coalition-building negotiations were also publicly covered by the Bolivian press, which suggests political actors used discussions of potential post-electoral alliances with the press as a way to send public signals, both to voters and other political actors.

Finally, though this dissertation focuses on elections and electoral politics, it avoids public opinion surveys as a means of primary data—though it does at times reference them as secondary materials. In part, this is a methodological decision: Bolivian election polls are rife with methodological problems that severely limit their usefulness. Samples are usually poorly specified and are most often limited to urban respondents (almost exclusively from the metropolitan areas of La Paz-El Alto, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz). While sample selection has improved over the years, polls are still less than fully reliable as scientific instruments. At best, the survey data can speak to trends or orientations, but using it to inform election analysis is problematic.

A second reason to eschew such data is that my research question is less concerned with voters' attitudes than it is with their observable behavior. I am also principally interested in how political parties respond to both institutional constraints (the “rules of the game”)

and voter behavior from one election to the next. In the end, the object of analysis in this study is political elites, not individual voters.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In addition to the above-mentioned methodological concerns (primarily concerning data availability), there are a few other notable limitations to this study. First, because this is a case study of Bolivia, it is not more comprehensively “comparative” but rather limited in what it can tell us about other cases of new democracies. Instead, this case study lies somewhere between a “theory-infirming” and “deviant” case study (Lijphart 1971), relying heavily on historical, analytical interpretation. Second, because this study deals with a still-evolving political event, my “time horizon” does not allow for a detailed explanation of the most recent Bolivian political events. It is possible that events may outpace me, as the October 2003 rupture clearly did. Similarly, the highly polarized nature of current Bolivian political life makes any objective observation difficult.

Third, it may seem odd that a contemporary study on Bolivia’s political crisis pays scant attention to indigenous social movements and organizations. In part, this is because my reading of Bolivia’s political situation suggests that such movements were not very “significant”—even if they were at times influential.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to those who see Evo Morales as an “indigenous” political leader, I place him within an older, post-Chaco “state-corporatist” discourse that has adopted “indigenous” rhetoric and symbolism only

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<sup>34</sup> I mean “significant” in an electoralist sense. It is surprising that a country like Bolivia, with nearly two-thirds of its population identified as “indigenous,” that openly indigenous parties never won more than 1-2% of the popular vote before 2002. Various indigenous elites did influence political discourse, particularly within the liberal-pluralist framework (which more easily incorporated elements of identity politics).

superficially (and recently). Hopefully, my argument for placing Evo Morales and his MAS party within the post-Chaco political discourse is convincing.

Originally (as conceived during 2001-2002), this project involved a series of elite interviews. But I arrived in Bolivia only weeks before Sánchez de Lozada was forced from office. This presented two complications: First, many of the elite actors I had intended to interview were either displaced or extremely preoccupied. Second, my first informal interviews made clear that retroactive assessments of pre-2003 politics (the original purpose of the interviews was to discuss politics since 1985) was no longer possible without explicit references to—and ideologically entrenched positions (whether sympathetic to or against recent developments)—October 2003. In short, the series of informal interviews I had planned would be unable to provide any objective historical analysis of pre-crisis politics. Instead, I used these informal conversations—this time focusing almost exclusively on social scientists—to assist in hypothesis-formation and to guide my own analysis of Bolivian politics.

One further limitation is temporal (related to the issue of “outpacing” mentioned above): This study does not cover the July 2006 elections for the new constituent assembly nor the simultaneous popular referendum on regional (departmental) autonomy. Both events are, of course, incredibly relevant to understand the still-developing Bolivian political crisis. Most importantly, the constituent assembly—and the issues involved in crafting a new “social contract”—are incredibly relevant for further exploring the issue of how Bolivia’s democratic imaginary is publicly constructed. That issue is left for a future research project.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE GHOSTS OF 1952

This chapter describes Bolivia as an *imagined political community*, using Benedict Anderson's (1991) conceptual framework for modern nationalisms.<sup>35</sup> My approach is based on a reading of twentieth century Bolivian history that differs slightly from conventional wisdom. While most commonly accepted historical accounts—particularly English-language accounts—give a narrative of the 1952 Revolution followed by military-authoritarian reaction after 1964, I looked to key Bolivian accounts that give a slightly different narrative of their national revolution. My method is historical, presenting an overview of twentieth century Bolivian history, drawn from different historical narratives, and with an emphasis on the continuity across much of Bolivia's twentieth century political history. The purpose in this chapter is not to challenge accepted social scientific accounts of Bolivian political history (accounts I also use in the following pages), but to illuminate how the idea of a National Revolution was perceived in the collective imagination of Bolivia's political elites—in short, how they imagined their modern Bolivian nation.

Keeping with the stilt-walker analogy introduced earlier, the 1952 Revolution “elevated” a new political elite—commonly referred to by Bolivians as *la clase política* (“the political class”). This new social sector was primarily middle-class in orientation, though it

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<sup>35</sup> Anderson describes modern nations as “imagined political communities” because their individual members, who might never meet each other, nevertheless imagine themselves members of a common community, a community that is limited, sovereign, and horizontally egalitarian (Anderson 1991, p. 5-7). The act of “imagining” does not imply “falsity”, but rather an ongoing process of “creation”. A discussion of this concept and its relationship to a democratic political community is found in Chapter 2.

was more specifically engaged in internal struggles (among various factions) for government spoils.<sup>36</sup> As such, members of the political class stood above the majority of ordinary Bolivians. Unlike the previous *ancien régime* politicians, however, this new “national” political class was directly connected to the general population, which it claimed to represent. This new regime was in a precarious position: Since the regime’s ideology claimed a legitimate and direct link between the government and the “popular” sectors, the danger of a mass popular revolt—usually mobilized by dissident sectors of the political class—could destabilize the political system. In 1982, the new Bolivian democracy inherited this social system.

I start from Fernando Mayorga’s (1993) sociological analysis of a “revolutionary nationalist discourse” that emerged during the Chaco War and was hegemonic until the 1980s. I also closely follow Christopher Mitchell (1977), whose study of 1930s-1970s Bolivian politics, describes the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) as the product of two-decades-long consolidation of a “populist coalition” that was subsequently retained as the “social framework” of later military regimes.<sup>37</sup> A joint reading of the two suggests significant continuity throughout twentieth century Bolivian political history. While Fernando Mayorga provides a sociological analysis of emerging political discourse, Mitchell provides an organizational analysis of how the MNR (as a party) came to dominate political

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<sup>36</sup> The Bolivian “political class” is a particular subsection of the middle class. It includes not only politicians, but all those who “live from politics” (such as bureaucrats) and, therefore, have a vested interest in maintaining civilian involvement in political life.

<sup>37</sup> Mitchell uses the term “populism” differently than most current scholars. For Mitchell, “populism” implies an appeal to a broad, multi-class popular political base. Nevertheless, the key component of the populist alliances Mitchell describes (he considers the MNR, Peru’s APRA, Mexico’s PRI, and Venezuela’s AD as similar cases of the category “populist party”) are the middle classes. Another authors who uses “populism” this way is Torcuato Di Tella (2004), who further classifies party into “middle-class populist” and “working-class populist” parties. Like Mitchell, Di Tella also classifies the MNR as a middle-class populist party.

discourse shortly after its founding in 1941, and how the party's loose organizational structure and ideological flexibility allowed it to better exploit and shape the emerging national revolutionary discourse. Paralleling most Bolivian accounts, Mitchell provides a convincing argument for political "continuism" well after military regimes overthrew the MNR civilian government in 1964. Although a common nationalist discourse soon became hegemonic in Bolivian politics after the 1930s, the 1952 revolt was carried out by an MNR that was not ideologically cohesive; different wings and tendencies within the party would continue to vie for control of the revolution's direction long after 1952.

The national revolutionary discourse is important not just for understanding the attitudes and behavior of political elites. The hegemony of this discourse carried into the post-democratization period two important historical legacies. The first was a tendency for political parties to organize themselves as coalitions of interest groups and local notables, rather than as formally institutionalized and ideologically cohesive party organizations. In fact, political parties in the post-democratization period were marked by a remarkable tendency to avoid specific ideological doctrines, preferring instead the kind of ideological flexibility that allowed them to appeal to wider cross-sections of the electorate. A second legacy of the national revolutionary period was the consolidation of a corporatist-developmental state model that played a significant role in the national economy.<sup>38</sup> The new liberal-pluralist discourse, dominant among members of the political elite after the transition to democracy, called into question this "national revolutionary" state model. In

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<sup>38</sup> While Bolivia's corporatist state was never fully consolidated, the ideal model was. That is, Bolivian political elites failed to consolidate a sufficiently autonomous state apparatus, even though the model of what a legitimate national state *should look like* was consolidated in the popular imagination. For a description of this state model, see García Argañaras 1993.

large measure, post-democratization politics oversaw a systematic rejection and dismantling of the previous state by political elites determined to craft a new liberal-pluralist one. Opposition to the new liberal-pluralist discourse—and particularly the neoliberal economic policies it generated—would eventually produce new populist political movements that defended the values of the traditional corporatist state.

An emphasis on understanding Bolivia's pre-democratic experience is consistent with the historical institutionalism framework used throughout this study. Bolivia's democracy did not emerge from a vacuum; preceding historical-institutional legacies played a powerful role in shaping the democratic polity and its political imaginary. Understanding the nationalist discourse that dominated twentieth century Bolivian politics and juxtaposing it to the liberal-pluralist discourse that overtook it in the 1990s gives us a better understanding of Bolivia's current political crisis. As this chapter illustrates, Bolivia's twentieth century revolutionary nationalism was not only a deliberately constructed discourse, it also played a key role in legitimating the Bolivian state. The shift in elite political discourse reopened Bolivia's *demos* question and issues of state legitimization. The political crisis facing Bolivia today is as much a question of what kind of national political community it "should" be, as any other issue.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Many of the current salient issues in Bolivian politics can be understood this way. Some examples: calls by COB union leaders to nationalize oil and gas resources to renew state-led development evoke the corporatist-nationalist discourse; calls for regional autonomy by lowland leaders who also support the neoliberal economic model borrow from the liberal-pluralist discourse; calls by indigenous leaders for regional autonomy and greater acceptance of indigenous traditions apply a distinct *katarista* discourse.

## Bolivia Before and After 1952: A Brief History

The 1952 Bolivian Revolution is considered one of the major social revolutions of twentieth century Latin America.<sup>40</sup> The April 1952 uprising, though relatively quick (the *ancien régime* was swept away in only three days of fighting), was itself the product of nearly two decades of evolving revolutionary nationalist political discourse. Though most political histories trace the revolution's origins to early twentieth century Bolivian history—frequently citing the role of the Chaco War with Paraguay (1932-1935) as a catalyst—these tend to focus on the April 1952 uprising, relegating preceding events to the role of precursors. A recent volume edited by Merilee Grindle and Pilar Domingo (2003) includes chapters from a number of prominent political historians who study Bolivia; all the authors take this approach in their reflections of the 50th anniversary of the 1952 Revolution. Eric Selbin's (1999) comparative study of Latin American social revolutions synthesizes the conventional view of the 1952 Revolution as the starting point of what would later become an “uncompleted” social revolution.<sup>41</sup> Bolivian accounts, however, understand 1952 quite differently—viewing the events of April 1952 as the victorious moment of a revolutionary nationalist process, a process that continued long beyond 1952.<sup>42</sup> A close look at the post-

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<sup>40</sup> At one time, the Bolivian revolution ranked with the Mexican revolution; both substantially reshaped their respective social and political structure. The revolution, though considered a “failure” compared to Mexico's “success” was broadly discussed. See Huntington 1969 (p. 275), Skocpol 1979 (p. 287), Hobsbawm 1986 (p. 23), and Knight 1990 (p. 182). Seminal English-language accounts of the 1952 Revolution and its aftermath include Alexander 1958, Klein 1968, Malloy 1970, Dunkerley 1984, and Malloy and Gamarra 1988.

<sup>41</sup> Selbin writes: “There is unquestionably a consensus that a revolutionary process *began to unfold in Bolivia in 1952* [italics added]...” (1999, p. 34).

<sup>42</sup> F. Mayorga writes: “The revolution of 52 was, without a doubt, the establishing moment of the Bolivian nation and the nationalist ideology occupied the ‘hegemonic center’ of the *process that culminated in the April insurrection* [italics added], that is, civil society was shaped and defined ... through the revolutionary nationalist discourse” (1993, p. 23, my translation). Examples of this view of 1952 and the “national revolution” in



1964 military regimes also demonstrates a sense of continuism: each of the military regimes (at least until 1978-1982) not only explicitly declared themselves as “restoring” the revolution, they were actively supported by competing factions of the earlier 1952-1964 MNR coalition.

A brief comparison to the Mexican Revolution (1910-1928) is instructive. First, Bolivian political intellectuals clearly looked to Mexico as a model for their own national revolution.<sup>43</sup> Second, despite their different origins and trajectories, state-building and nation-building processes accompanied both revolutions. Both revolutions were successful in fundamentally (and in large measure irreversibly) transforming their respective social, political, and economic structures. Both revolutionary experiences included long periods of turbulent violence that saw opposing (even counter-revolutionary) forces vie for control.<sup>44</sup> Where the Bolivian revolution “failed” was in the inability of the MNR to consolidate its monopoly on power and establish the same kind of long-lasting, institutionalized hegemonic single-party system as Mexico’s Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).<sup>45</sup>

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Bolivian accounts include Ayala 1956, Céspedes 1956, Bedregal 1958, Smith Aríñez 1960, and Antezana 1969. Such authors are marked by tendency for a teleological view of history. Accounts of continuism after 1964 include García Argañaras (1993). Some English-language accounts also note a continuation after 1964. See especially Mitchell 1977 and Malloy and Gamarra 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Another important model was Peru’s Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) a populist-nationalist party founded in 1929. APRA was particularly influential among the middle-class intellectuals who would go on to form the MNR. But while APRA was perhaps a closer ideological model, the Mexican post-revolutionary state served as a model (for many Latin Americans) of what a corporatist-popular regime looked like in practice.

<sup>44</sup> Though the violence of the 1952 uprising itself was brief, the similarity with the Mexican case rests with the back-and-forth nature of Bolivia’s political struggle, with revolutionary and reactionary regimes briefly winning ascendancy between 1936 through 1952. This historical process is explained below.

<sup>45</sup> My interpretation differs from the one presented by Selbin (1999, pp. 33-39), who argues that Bolivia’s revolution was institutionalized (establishing a government) but not consolidated (convincing people to

Internal splits within the MNR coalition became increasingly problematic after 1956 and by 1964 a military coup swept the party's civilian revolutionary leadership aside. Yet the military regimes that governed from 1964 through 1982 not only did not reverse most MNR policies or change the state model, they were often backed by alternating factions of the MNR leadership and staked their legitimacy on claims of continuing the national revolution.<sup>46</sup> It is possible, of course, that such claims were mere rhetoric. But the military regimes (especially the lengthy Barrientos 1964-1969 and Banzer 1971-1978 dictatorships) did have substantial ties to the national revolutionary project and the MNR. Most significant, however, is that after 1952 the revolutionary nationalist discourse was hegemonic. No successful political movement (from the right or the left) tried to identify itself with or appeal to a different discourse and no regime attempted to use a different political vocabulary. Moreover, the struggles between the Bolivian right and left between 1964 and 1982 mirrored the same internal divisions that had plagued both the broader revolutionary nationalist movement leadership and the MNR before 1952. In short, none of the post-1952 political movements advocated a return to the pre-1952 status quo.

Considered as a national revolution, the Bolivian revolution seems to have been firmly consolidated and certainly not a failure.<sup>47</sup> The 1952 Revolution was in many ways the

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"embrace the social revolutionary project", p. 13). I argue that the key features of the revolutionary project were already accepted by a critical mass of the population before 1952, suggesting that the revolutionary project was consolidated, even if the party that came to power (the MNR) was not.

<sup>46</sup> Scholars have long accepted a narrative of the Mexican Revolution that encompasses nearly two decades of political violence and upheaval, including back and forth struggle between various national political factions and leaders. I see no reason why a similar interpretation of struggles between Bolivia's nationalist factions is not also possible. I briefly outline a case for a Bolivian revolutionary continuism after 1964 later in this chapter.

<sup>47</sup> It is important to clearly differentiate between the nation-building and state-building elements of the Bolivian revolution. Where the MNR failed was in building a sufficiently autonomous state.

culmination of a broad revolutionary project aimed at consolidating a new national identity based on integrationist *mestizo* nationalism.<sup>48</sup> The nationalist project proclaimed a community where class, ethnic, and regional distinctions were subsumed under a common, corporate national identity. Among the key reforms of the 1952 Revolution were agrarian reform and the abolition of the semi-feudal *hacienda* system, state control over much of the country's economic activity, and universal adult suffrage. Prior to 1952, voting was heavily restricted to only white adult males; the vast majority of the indigenous population was excluded from the electoral process. By introducing universal suffrage—and the recognition of indigenous *campesinos* as citizen members of “the nation”—the leaders of the national revolution turned to creating a new sense of national unity. And while the 1930s saw a resurgence of regionalist movements (particularly in Santa Cruz), these all but disappeared by the mid-1950s, in large measure as a product of deliberate state policies meant to more closely integrate—both politically and economically—previously marginalized regions of the country.

One key program of the revolution was educational reform, by which Spanish literacy was imposed on the nation's *campesinos* (“Indians” became “peasants”) in what Aurolyn Luykx (1999) describes as “citizen factories.”<sup>49</sup> This state-corporatist national

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<sup>48</sup> The revolutionary nationalist project was “integrationist” because, like other nation-building projects (e.g. France, Russia, Mexico), it aimed to assimilate various social groups—regardless of regional, ethnic, or class differences—into a single homogenous community. They pursued this goal by promoting a Spanish-language *mestizo* (mixed race/ethnic) identity. The revolutionary nationalist project was also “integrationist” in another sense. Throughout much of Bolivian history, political life focused almost exclusively in the urban centers, especially the capital city. The nationalist integrationist program pursued by the MNR also emphasized a need to incorporate the frontier provinces more closely into national political, economic, and social life. Though always, of course, with a centralist orientation.

<sup>49</sup> Luykx's work focuses on recent Bolivian history, and looks at how students resist the kind of cultural assimilation imposed on them by public schools (what she calls “citizen factories”). I have merely used her catch-phrase, since it describes the kind of educational reformism adopted by the nationalist revolutionary

discourse was reinforced by a political mythology that wove post-Chaco Bolivian history into a single narrative, reflected in a teleological tendency in Bolivian historical accounts. Later movements and regimes (whether civilian or military) made significant efforts to establish their legitimacy by explicitly connecting themselves to the events and heroes of this revolutionary national narrative. Other discourses, such as those concerning identity politics—principally revolving around ethnic and regional differences—would not gain salience in Bolivian politics until after the democratic transition.

### **The Chaco War and the Crisis of the *Ancien Régime***

Bolivia began the twentieth century with civilian government and a competitive political party system. Nevertheless, political life was restricted to a small (mostly white) Spanish-speaking elite—known collectively as *la rosca*—dominated by the powerful *hacendados* (the traditional landed elite) and the “tin barons” (Aramayo, Hochschild, and Patiño). Suffrage was closely restricted: women, Indians, the poor, and the illiterate were barred from voting through legal provisions and poll taxes.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, the majority of the indigenous rural population lived in poverty and servitude. Since the 1880s, the “liberal republic” attacked indigenous communal land rights and oversaw the expansion of the *hacienda* system of landlord-peasant relations. By the 1920s, political competition revolved around the Liberal and Republican parties, though minor parties represented the nascent labor movement and other challenges to the liberal republic’s status quo.

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movement, reforms meant to create new “Bolivian” citizens. A conception of national educational systems as “citizen factories” is also consistent with descriptions by Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1992), and Anderson (1991).

<sup>50</sup> Ironically, while most native-born Bolivian adults were excluded from voting, non-citizen foreigners who met length-of-residency requirements were allowed to vote.

A collapse of tin prices during the Great Depression exposed underlying socioeconomic problems associated with monocultural dependence on tin exports and the country's racial caste system. It was in this context that Bolivia entered the Chaco War. The war grew out of escalating conflicts over the long-disputed territory. Despite initial hopes, gross political mismanagement and a stubborn Paraguayan counter-offensive soon left the Bolivian army reeling; by 1934, Paraguayan forces threatened the Andean foothills.<sup>51</sup> That November, the military high command overthrew the civilian government of Daniel Salamanca. It was only in 1935 that Bolivian forces—under the command of a young field commander, Major Germán Busch—managed to halt the Paraguayan advance. Finally, exhausted after three years of bitter fighting, the two sides signed a peace treaty that formally recognized Paraguay's claim to almost the entire disputed territory.<sup>52</sup>

The military defeat shattered middle-class confidence in the social, political, and economic status quo. The Chaco War was Bolivia's first "modern" war; nationwide mobilization was extensive, affecting almost an entire generation of Bolivian men. In many ways, the war was comparable to the First World War, both in the type and scope of the fighting and the social upheaval that followed.<sup>53</sup> More than 56,000 (about one in five of all Bolivian combatants) died in the war—a figure that amounts to two percent of the total population. Most affected were the lower middle-class (primarily *mestizo*) junior and

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<sup>51</sup> At the start of the war, most observers expected the larger, better-equipped and German-trained Bolivian army to easily defeat Paraguay. For extensive historical analysis of the war, see Zook 1960 and Farcau 1996.

<sup>52</sup> To give a sense of the scope of Paraguay's victory in the war: The size of the disputed territory awarded to Paraguay was nearly double the country's pre-war size.

<sup>53</sup> Both post-war Russia and post-war Germany are cases that resemble post-war Bolivia. In both cases, military defeat shattered confidence in the status quo and led to social revolutions that swept away the *ancien régime*. The origins of the Bolivian social revolution thus fit the pattern in Skocpol 1979.

noncommissioned officers who served in the front lines, sharing common hardships with their Indian subordinates—most of whom could not even speak Spanish.<sup>54</sup> Here, often for the first time, they confronted the harsh realities of their society's racial caste system. The new "Chaco generation" of young intellectuals that emerged from this experience was highly radicalized, critical of the status quo, and included individuals who would later play a key role in national revolutionary movements.

The 1934 military coup dealt a crippling blow to the *ancien régime* and signaled an acceptance by military officers of their direct participation in Bolivian politics, a role they had not played since 1880. And while the traditional, established parties—now joined in a broad coalition—could no longer count on the support of the middle classes, the latter were not yet organized into a unified revolutionary movement. The result would be a back-and-forth struggle between different nationalist elements and the remnants of the traditional oligarchy that lasted from 1936 through 1952.

### **The National Revolution: A Historicist View**

The two decades immediately following the war saw the emergence of three phenomena: the consolidation of a new national revolutionary discourse, the rise of the MNR as the dominant political organization, and the construction of a new national state. All three would have significant consequences for the post democratization period. A historicist view of Bolivia's national revolution places April 1952 within a broader historical

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<sup>54</sup> There is historical consensus that Indian ex-combatants were more easily reabsorbed back into the *ancien régime* social system. Most active post-war social movements were predominantly middle class in orientation, leadership, and membership. For an overview of emerging rural social movements during this period, see Antezana and Romeo 1968, Dandler 1969, Klein 1969, and Dandler 1971.

process. Most Bolivian accounts, as previously noted, consider the two decades following the Chaco War as a continuous process in which April 1952 is only the apex. Without endorsing (or rejecting) this perspective—one must remember that this is a constructed national narrative—I wish to sketch out a history of Bolivia from 1936 to 1952 within this historicist framework. The implications of this historical narrative—the consolidation of a post-Chaco national imaginary and the enduring legacy of populism—are discussed later in this chapter.

Bolivian accounts trace the origin of the national revolution to the Germán Busch regime (1936-1939).<sup>55</sup> Barely a year after the end of the Chaco War, the colonels' coup initiated a process of radical economic and political changes under a banner of “military socialism” (Klein 1965) supported by members of the Chaco generation. The project closely modeled the contemporary Mexican example, seeking to establish a corporatist-developmental state. The regime's reforms included: a new 1938 Constitution that gave the state a powerful role in economic life;<sup>56</sup> the country's first labor code, known as the Código Busch (1939), which became a centerpiece of future labor policy for most subsequent regimes; and the formation of the country's state-owned oil company, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Bolivia (YPFB). The regime's main shortcoming was its high degree of personalism, which left the popular young war hero increasingly isolated from

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<sup>55</sup> Though two colonels, David Toro and Germán Busch, jointly initiated the 17 May 1936 coup, the latter was the main protagonist. Busch formally deposed Toro on 13 July 1937 and assumed full control of the regime.

<sup>56</sup> The 1938 Constitution was modeled on the Mexican Constitution of 1917, which was a model of the “social constitutionalism” trend throughout Latin America. Under the constitution, property was no longer an inalienable right, but rather depended on “social utility.” For a discussion of Bolivia's experience with “social constitutionalism,” see Klein 1966.

institutionalized bases of support. On 23 August 1939, a frustrated Busch committed suicide.<sup>57</sup>

The Busch regime was followed by a brief restoration as the Liberal and Republican parties formed an alliance (the *Concordancia*) to win the 1940 presidential election. Nevertheless, Marxist and national revolutionary candidates won a majority of the legislative seats. In the first post-Chaco election, the traditional parties had trouble winning votes from a highly restricted electorate. The opposition was split into three blocs: Soviet-line Marxists, who formed the *Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (PIR); the Trotskyite *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (POR); and a group of middle-class nationalists who had supported the Busch regime and would go on to form the MNR within a year. All three blocs agreed on some basic principles: nationalization of key industries, support for a growing labor movement, and anti-imperialism. While PIR and POR addressed the peasant question, the MNR remained silent on the issue.

The Second World War produced a significant realignment. Hitler's 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union led the PIR (and many POR deputies) to reverse their stance and adopt a pro-Allied position that made them allies of the *Concordancia* regime. The move left the MNR as the only significant opposition party. When a series of mineworkers' strikes in 1942 ended in repression, it was the MNR's Paz Estenssoro who denounced the "Catavi massacre" from the legislature. Following on the heels of a 1942 election that had seen the MNR expand its support—at the cost of both *Concordancia* and Marxist parties—the Catavi massacre was a devastating blow to the liberal republican government.

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<sup>57</sup> While Busch's suicide is generally accepted, some have claimed that he was actually murdered by political opponents. See Paredes Candia 1997.



Only two years after its founding, the MNR participated in its first coup.<sup>58</sup> The 1943 civil-military putsch was principally organized by members of Razón de Patria (RADEPA), a secret military *logia* (“lodge”) founded by eighteen Bolivian junior officers held in Paraguayan prisoner-of-war camps. RADEPA members had been key supporters of the Busch regime and represented an ultra-nationalist position.<sup>59</sup> The Gualberto Villarroel regime (1943-1946) marked a radical phase of the national revolutionary movement. Both *ancien régime* liberals and Marxist-socialists were heavily persecuted.<sup>60</sup> It was the regime’s pro-Allied policies, however, that led the MNR to distance itself from the regime by early 1944. Thus, the MNR was partly insulated when the regime fell. On 14 July 1946, in a burst of popular mob violence, Villarroel was dragged out of the Presidential Palace and hanged from a lamppost.

The subsequent governments, known as the *sexenio* (1946-1952), saw an awkward alliance between liberals and Marxists. Despite PIR control over several key ministries—including the Ministry of Labor—the *sexenio* governments were rather unfriendly to labor. By 1944, PIR had lost its influence with labor as independent labor leaders, led by Juan Lechín, brought the MNR and the mineworkers’ closer together.<sup>61</sup> A key moment was the Thesis of Pulacayo. Announced only months after Villarroel’s death, the mineworkers federation

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<sup>58</sup> The 1943 coup was also supported by the fascist Falange Socialista Boliviano (FSB).

<sup>59</sup> For a history of RADEPA written by former members, see Murillo and Larrea 1988. The authors present the Villarroel regime as part of the larger national revolutionary movement and call it the “base of the explosion [sic] of 1952 and laid the foundation for reform that today are irreversible” [my translation]” (p. 18).

<sup>60</sup> The Villarroel regime was one of the most brutal in Bolivia’s twentieth century. Unhappy with popular support for PIR in the 1944 election, the regime merely executed *pirista* leaders, closed their newspapers, and jailed their supporters. After a brief 1945 uprising by liberals in the city of Oruro, Villarroel ordered mass executions of liberal politicians.

<sup>61</sup> In June 1944, a mineworkers’ congress at Huanuni established the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (FSTMB), which soon became the labor movement’s radical-militant vanguard.

firmly rejected the *sexenio* regime, called for the immediate formation of workers' militias, and declared a "permanent revolution." After another series of mineworkers strikes at the Catavi mines in 1947 ended in repression, PIR was effectively destroyed as a party organization.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, the MNR consolidated its position as the political vanguard of the national revolutionary movement and positioned itself closer to the labor movement.

In 1949, the MNR attempted its first independent putsch, organized by Siles Zuazo. Only three years after Villarroel's death, the September 1949 uprising clearly demonstrated the MNR's ability to mobilize a credible armed threat. Like the later successful April 1952 uprising, the 1949 revolt was highly coordinated. MNR civilian militias simultaneously and successfully seized control of all the country's major cities, with the notable exception of La Paz. Having established a provision headquarters in Santa Cruz, the MNR militias fought the army for two months before finally capitulating. Only months later, in May 1950, a spontaneous factory workers' strike in La Paz swiftly escalated into yet another MNR-led insurrection. This feat should not be underestimated: Only seven years after its founding, MNR cadres were able—and willing—to stand toe-to-toe against the military.

After the 1951 presidential election (which by all accounts the MNR won) was annulled by a conservative military coup, the MNR fully committed itself to total civil war and the complete destruction of the army as an institution. Unlike in the 1949 uprising, when its leaders refused to open captured armories to the broader public, restricting the fighting to its organized party *comandos*, the MNR now actively encouraged broad popular participation. On 9 April 1952, the final MNR revolt began, this time with the participation of the FSTMB mineworkers' militias. After three days of intense fighting, especially in the city of La Paz,

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<sup>62</sup> While some middle-class intellectuals (the party's leadership core) continued to be active, the party would never regain the support of the urban or mining proletariat.

the army was effectively destroyed as an institution and the last elements of the liberal republic were swept away. The victorious MNR would go on to rule Bolivia for the next twelve years.

### **The Fragile MNR Hegemony, 1952-1964**

The MNR that seized power in 1952 was not an ideologically cohesive political party, but rather a multi-class alliance of diverse popular sectors.<sup>63</sup> This “populist” strategy of multi-sectoral alliances and pacts would define the future evolution of Bolivia’s political party system. Since 1946, the MNR leadership pursued a strategy of building networks and alliances with key leaders of different social movements, especially labor. While the MNR’s middle-class origins dictated the central leaderships’ ultimate interests, the party platform offered vague, reformist promises meant to appeal to a broad popular cross-section. But between 1952 and 1956, the central leadership attempted to reign in popular movements and establish a centralized, institutional party organization similar to Mexico’s PRI. After 1956, these efforts broke down as different personal factions within the MNR vied for control. These factional conflicts shaped the politics of the next three decades. But such conflicts—even those between the middle classes, labor, and *campesinos*—took place within a common, underlying national discourse. The nineteenth century *ancien régime* liberalism was swept away and discredited, as was the PIR’s orthodox Marxism; these were replaced by the integrationist, revolutionary nationalism promoted by the MNR. The political conflict of the next three decades was principally a struggle over the ownership and direction of the national revolution.

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<sup>63</sup> See Mitchell 1977, who compares the MNR with three other multi-class populist parties: Peru’s APRA, Venezuela’s COPEI, and Mexico’s PRI.

The sudden and absolute collapse of the *ancien régime* in 1952 left a situation of political chaos and uncertainty. Party leaders struggled to regain control of the broader revolutionary process they had unleashed. Especially problematic were the mineworkers, who were aligned with the Trotskyite POR, and whose demands conflicted with the MNR's middle-class interests.<sup>64</sup> The early period of MNR government was marked by attempts to reconcile *movimientista* and *porista* policy agendas. The result was a corporatist system of *cogobierno* in which different sectors were allowed to govern their own affairs with little interference from the central leadership. In an effort to co-opt the labor movement, MNR leaders supported the creation of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), a national labor federation, under the leadership of Juan Lechín. The COB kept its independence from the MNR and became a key element of a *cogobierno* ("co-government") system. Between 1952 through 1956, a careful balance was maintained between the middle-class MNR and the COB.

In the chaos immediately following April 1952, a radical peasant movement began to sweep the countryside. Without no central army or state authority to restrain them, and encouraged by the labor movement, peasants began organizing into their own rural *sindicatos* and forming their own militias to attack the *hacienda* system. By August 1953, the Paz Estenssoro government recognized what was by now essentially a fait accompli and issued an agrarian reform decree that abolished the hacienda land-tenure system and issued land titles to peasants. Soon after becoming a class of landowners, however, the *campesinos* became an increasingly conservative force, often hostile to the urban labor movement. In time, MNR leaders would learn to mobilize rural voters in their internal struggles with labor.

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<sup>64</sup> While the MNR had established workers' *células* within the mines themselves, the real power within the mineworkers' movement were the local FSTMB *sindicatos*. POR labor organizers typically controlled these.

By 1956, there were growing divisions between the MNR and COB.<sup>65</sup> In an effort to retain governmental stability, Siles Zuazo (who succeeded Paz Estenssoro) abandoned the previous coalition-building strategy and instead encouraged personal factionalism within the leadership. Though temporarily successful, the strategy had long-term consequences. First, of course, the move deinstitutionalized the party and transformed it into a constellation of personalist factions. Many factional conflicts became increasingly bitter personal feuds, which in turn would weaken both the MNR (and, to a lesser degree, the COB) as well as the state (which increasingly became a resource for political patronage). Another long-term consequence was that many of these factions would go on to form key elements of the later post-democratization party system.

While losing the support of the militant labor movement (and its workers' militias), the Siles Zuazo government had to develop new strategies for maintain state authority. One approach was to mobilize the rural *campesinos*, frequently used as a blunt coercive instrument against labor and other regime opponents.<sup>66</sup> Such a strategy was dangerous, however, since rural *candillos* often fought each other—such as the 1959-1962 civil war between Ucureña and Cliza forces in the Cochabamba valley—and revived middle class fears of armed Indian uprisings. The other strategy was to rebuild the Bolivian military. Beginning in 1957, the military was reorganized as officers dismissed during the *sexenio* (for Busch-Villaruel sympathies) were returned to active duty. The new post-1952 military was predominantly middle class and generally committed to the national revolutionary position. The new

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<sup>65</sup> Many refer to 1956 as the Bolivian revolution's "Thermidor" since, during the Siles Zuazo presidency, the MNR began distancing itself from labor and aligning itself more closely with the middle classes.

<sup>66</sup> In March 1959, a *campesino* force from Ucureña was mobilized to break up an FSTMB strike in the city of Oruro. A similar force briefly occupied the city of Santa Cruz in 1958 following an abortive FSB revolt.

military was also deeply involved in rural developmentalist projects (e.g. road building, school construction, literacy projects), which would in time help establish a military-*campesino* political alliance.

By 1960, Siles Zuazo's personalistic leadership had eroded both the party's legitimacy as a social-representative institution and the central state's authority. A substantial increase in popular support for the right-wing FSB (Falange Socialista Boliviana) demonstrated middle class frustration. Meanwhile, several key party leaders abandoned the party to found their own political movements.<sup>67</sup> As the 1960 election neared, Paz Estenssoro brokered a deal with Lechín to back the former president against Siles Zuazo's chosen successor, Walter Guevara Arze. Once elected, Paz Estenssoro continued Siles Zuazo's practice of fomenting factional divisions, as he concentrated political control in the hands of the young MNR technocrats, most of whom were personally loyal to the party *jefe*. In 1964, Paz Estenssoro again secured his presidential nomination, though this time he named a military officer, René Barrientos, as his running mate. Only months after the election, Barrientos, supported by different MNR factions, overthrew Paz Estenssoro in a bloodless coup.

### **The 1964-1978 Military Regimes**

A common feature of the military regimes that governed Bolivia from 1964 to 1978 was their close ties to the MNR. They "did not constitute any change in the class allegiance or basic policies" (Mitchell 1977, p. 97). In part, the MNR's attempts to coordinate activities with sympathetic military officers in the 1940s had politicize the military. Similarly, the post-

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<sup>67</sup> These included: Izquierda Nacional del MNR (Siles Zuazo); MNR Auténtico (Walter Guevara Arze); Sector Izquierda del MNR (Lechín); Sector Socialista del MNR (Aníbal Aguilar, Edil Sandoval Moron); Frente de Unidad Nacionalista (José Fellman); and the Sector Pazestenssorista (Paz Estenssoro).

1952 purge of *ancien régime* officers and the reinstatement of Busch-Villarroel supporters, along with policies that encouraged middle class entrance into the officer corps, produced a new military committed to the national revolutionary project and with close ties to middle class interests. Meanwhile, the middle classes had slowly moved to the right as they sought to defend their post-revolutionary social and economic gains. By 1964, continued factional infighting and increasing violence in the countryside prompted the military high command to take an active political role. Nevertheless, these military regimes deviated little from the principal goals and orientation of the *movimientista* project.

The 1964 Barrientos coup was backed by a broad anti-*pazestensorista* coalition that included leftists and labor leaders.<sup>68</sup> Barrientos (then a young air force officer with national-revolutionary sympathies) had participated in the 1952 April uprising, and after the MNR's victory, had flown Paz Estenssoro back in La Paz from exile.<sup>69</sup> Once in power, however, Barrientos' regime quickly became highly personalist, conservative, and rabidly anti-Communist.<sup>70</sup> The regime aggressively attacked organized labor, slashing wages and militarizing the mines. Between 1965 and 1967, a series of labor strikes ended in violent clashes with the military. By the end of the Barrientos regime, with most COB, FSTMB, and other labor leaders jailed or exiled, organized labor was effectively dismantled. The result was reluctance by labor and the left to support any future regimes.

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<sup>68</sup> The 5 November 1964 coup was supported by the Lechín, Guevara Arze, and Siles Zuazo wings of the MNR, as well as by FSB, PIR, and PSD. Officially led by General Alfredo Ovando (Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces), but it was soon clear that Barrientos (Chief of the Air Force) was in charge.

<sup>69</sup> That event is often used to symbolically link Barrientos to Estenssoro and the wider *movimientista* project.

<sup>70</sup> The regime is internationally best remembered for its role in apprehending and killing Ernesto "Che" Guevara in 1967.

The regime relied on a military-*campesino* pact, formally signed between Barrientos and key rural leaders in 1966. The alliance, however, was one-sided. The military dominated the rural social movements by establishing patron-client networks. With overwhelming *campesino* support, Barrientos easily won the 1966 election—a plebiscite on the new regime. A 1966 constituent assembly drafted the 1967 Constitution, though not immediately enacted, later served as the foundation of the post-transition democratic system.<sup>71</sup> With little support from middle class political leaders, the personalistic regime was fragile; it did not survive Barrientos’ sudden death in April 1969.<sup>72</sup>

General Alfredo Ovando’s September 1969 military coup announced itself as a return to “national revolutionary” principles. The program, designed to appeal to the middle classes while also loosening restrictions on labor, was modeled on Peru’s “military socialist” regime.<sup>73</sup> To court middle class support, Ovando invited into his cabinet members of the MNR, FSB, and the new Christian Democracy movement. Efforts to improve relations with labor, however, failed. The COB remained skeptical after the Barrientos experience and refused to participate in or support the regime. With no institutional mechanism to channel or manage popular participation, Ovando’s loosening of restrictions merely increased anti-regime activity. Renewed violence between rival *campesino* groups in the Cochabamba valley frightened the middle class and the officer corps, the two groups Ovando’s regime relied

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<sup>71</sup> For a detailed discussion of the 1966 constituent assembly, see Barragán 2005, p. 374-378.

<sup>72</sup> Barrientos had named Luís Adolfo Siles Salinas as his vice president in 1966. Siles Salinas was a member of the Partido Social Demócrata (PSD), a small liberal middle-class party founded in 1947. Only months after assuming the presidency, Siles Salinas was overthrown in a military coup led by Ovando.

<sup>73</sup> A group of Peruvian national revolutionary military officers, led by Juan Velasco, overthrew the country’s APRA government in 1968. The regime, which lasted until 1975, had similar goals: nationalization of key industries, a developmentalist state, and agrarian reform.



upon. In 4 October 1970, army chief General Rogelio Miranda launched a coup. Because of growing splits within the military, Ovando was able to rally support. The result was a military deadlock that forced the military to hold a military congress, which voted on 7 October to replace Ovando with General Juan José Torres.<sup>74</sup>

The brief Torres regime was marked by left-nationalist policies and significant reliance on leftist middle-class intellectuals and labor leaders.<sup>75</sup> A disunited military also gave the regime considerable freedom of action. But continued factional splits within the labor movement and throughout the political left made governing extremely difficult. The most powerful labor organization, the COB, refused to give the regime more than conditional support. Hoping to establish an institutional base of popular support for his government, Torres convened a Popular Assembly in June 1970. Delegates to the assembly were not elected, but rather selected—almost exclusively by labor syndicates and Marxist political parties. The assembly's radical discourse solidified middle class opposition to the regime. In August, a civil-military putsch led by Colonel Hugo Banzer overthrew Torres.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> During the military's *cuartel general*, workers loyal to the Lechín COB faction, students from the public Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA), and the Siles Zuazo MNR faction declared their support for Torres, who had been forced to resign as army chief by Barrientos, and threatened armed insurrection.

<sup>75</sup> The most active civilian support for the regime came from the new ideological Marxist groups dominant in the universities. Among these were established groups like the POR, as well as a revitalized communist movement (though split into numerous Moscow, Beijing, and internationalist factions). One of the few groups that retained a decidedly left-nationalist orientation was the newly founded MIR.

<sup>76</sup> Banzer had already attempted a coup in January 1971 and was exiled after its failure. Plotting with the Paz Estenssoro wing of the MNR and with members of FSB, Banzer returned to Bolivia in August, entering through the city of Santa Cruz. From 20-23 August, Banzer advanced towards the capital as military units defected to his position. Only a few workers' militias and university students decided to make a stand in La Paz and Oruro; the result was the bloodiest coup since 1952.

The Banzer regime (1971-1978) was primarily supported by large sectors of the middle classes, particularly the new Santa Cruz agriculture and entrepreneurial elite. Banzer's civilian political support came from the Falange and the *pazestenssorista* wing of the MNR, which provided several cabinet ministers. Though the MNR would later be officially dismissed in 1974, when Banzer transformed the regime into an all-military dictatorship, the party rank-and-file and the regime retained close ideological ties. The regime continued the same state-capitalist model in place since 1952, though it made a stronger effort to control labor. Banzer removed labor (and *campesino*) leaders, replacing them with government-loyal "labor coordinators." The regime also employed significant levels of repression against political opponents.<sup>77</sup>

In 1974, Banzer announced an *autogolpe* ("self-coup") and initiated an all-military dictatorship. Like similar bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, the Banzer regime sought to develop a modern, national capitalist economy, while preventing the "social chaos" of democratic party politics, through a depoliticized, technocratic state. One of the goals of the regime was to accelerate the post-1952 policies of "national integration" by increasing investment in non-mining sectors of the economy—principally the Santa Cruz agricultural and business sectors. Yet the post-1974 regime brought increased opposition from the middle classes—particularly from members of the

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<sup>77</sup> Two incidents in 1974 stand out. To break up a university student protest, air force units strafed the UMSA campus, before a military ground assault. A *campesino* uprising that blockaded the rounds around the city of Cochabamba was similarly attacked by air force and army units, leaving at least 100 dead. By the end of the regime, at least 35,000 Bolivians had been jailed or exiled, and at least 500 were killed or disappeared.

“political class.” By 1977, growing social unrest against the regime forced Banzer to promise elections ahead of schedule, in 1978.<sup>78</sup>

### **Political Discourse and the National Imaginary**

A common thread tying Bolivian political life from the 1930s through the 1970s is the consolidation and hegemony of a new post-Chaco national imaginary marked by a strong historicist tendency. The discourse consolidated after 1952 provided the lens through which modern Bolivian national history is understood. In it, the April 1952 National Revolution represents a “historical axis” in which the nation’s different ethnic or regional groups, social classes, and other corporate sectors converged—and were integrated—into a single national community. Though this understanding of the 1952 revolt endures, the discourse that produced it was displaced—among members of the political class—during the 1980s. In many ways, the initial success of the democratization process produced a fractured collective consciousness. Principally, members of the political elite developed a new, liberal political discourse, even as large sections of the population continued to understand Bolivian politics through a post-Chaco discourse. The new elite discourse was, of course, consistent with the international orientation towards liberal-pluralist democracy. But its language was not (yet) part of the popular Bolivian vocabulary.

In sharp contrast to preceding period, the contemporary period is marked by three rival (and in many ways contradictory) political discourses:

1. A new liberal-pluralist discourse that emerged from the democratization process.

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<sup>78</sup> Banzer had originally declared that his regime would last until 1980.

2. An older state-corporatist discourse that survived from the post-Chaco national revolutionary period.

3. A new indigenous *katarista* discourse that developed since the late 1970s.

The liberal-pluralist discourse combines belief in neoliberal market economics with a pluralist conception of the political community. Proponents of this discourse emphasize the “pluricultural, multinational” nature of Bolivian society, as well as put an emphasis on the individual’s political and economic rights. The state-corporatist discourse articulates a belief in more activist state intervention in the economy—particularly in state ownership of key natural resources. Proponents of this discourse also emphasize the corporate nature of the political community, preferring to emphasize corporate (that is, group or sectoral) political and economic rights and identities, rather than individual ones. At its heart, the state-corporatist discourse is also a traditional nationalist discourse. Finally, the new *katarista* discourse (named after eighteenth century indigenous guerrilla leader, Tupac Katari) is essentially an indigenous millenarian political discourse. It is important to note that not all indigenous movements or leaders are part of this *katarista* discourse, many are better understood as part of the liberal-pluralist (e.g. Víctor Hugo Cardenas) or the state-corporatist (e.g. Evo Morales) discourses.

The state-corporatist national discourse emerged primarily from the Chaco War.<sup>79</sup> The war had a profound effect on the national psyche and brought the national question directly into public political discourse. This evolving discourse fit the revolutionary

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<sup>79</sup> There was an earlier nationalist literary tradition that emerged around the turn of the century. The most notable figure of this movement was Franz Tamayo, a Bolivian intellectual and politician. His essay *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* (1910)—a discourse on the need for a nationalist, integrationist educational system—is still highly influential.

nationalist form outlined by Anderson (1991): print capitalism fostered the development of a decidedly “nationalist” literary genre and a dramatic growth in newspapers, pamphleteering, and other means of printed text that anchored a shared (national) communal experience among the literate middle class. One clear example was the new “Chaco novel,” which began appearing during the war.<sup>80</sup> Rooted in an earlier realist style, these novels were marked by proletarian point-of-view and thematic attacks against the racial caste system—often portraying high-ranking military officers as incompetent, cowardly, and treacherous. The tone and subject matter of the Chaco novel reflected the new nationalist discourse common among members of the Chaco generation; these openly criticized the liberal republic as “anti-national” or “colonialist.” Similar attacks were also made in the new anti-establishment newspapers and presses throughout the 1930s and 1940s. One of these was *La Calle*, a popular nationalist agitation newspaper edited by future MNR founders.<sup>81</sup> By the late 1930s, the harshest indictment against any political figure was that of being a *rosquero* (a supporter of the oligarchy, or *la rosca*) or an *entreguista* (a traitor, one who delivers the nation to foreign interests).

The Chaco War became a central moment in the new national imaginary. The war was (and still is) seen as a collective, national tragedy. The bitterness of the conflict, the harsh conditions of the battlefield, and the poor organizational capacity of the liberal republic’s elite—all vividly expressed in the popular Chaco novels—became an important reference point for future political leaders and movements. In the new national imaginary,

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<sup>80</sup> For discussions of the Chaco novel, see MacLeod 1962, Stock 1969, and Salinas 1969.

<sup>81</sup> These included: Carlos Montenegro, Augusto Céspedes (the movement’s first ideologue), Armando Arce, and José Cuadros Quiroga (who wrote the party’s first manifesto). These men would later comprise the MNR’s right wing.

the Chaco battlefields were the place where the Bolivian people “discovered themselves” as a national community. In the historical national narrative, the war also became part of a longer tradition of collective national suffering at the hands of foreign interests and “anti-national” elites. Another such collective national tragedy is the War of the Pacific (1879-1884), in which Bolivia lost its coastal Litoral to Chile. Interestingly, unlike that conflict, which still extends animosity outward (toward Chile), the post-Chaco nationalism directed animosity inwards (toward local elites).<sup>82</sup> Annual commemorative ceremonies, however, frequently tie both events together; the 23 March Día del Mar parades invariably include a contingent of aging Chaco War veterans and war widows.<sup>83</sup> Through official (and unofficial) history, the Chaco War mythos and its role in the national consciousness were carefully maintained.

As a foundational narrative, the Chaco War mythos can be expressed as an archetypal journey through the wilderness. The arid lowland plains of the Chaco, in which a fifth of all Bolivian combatants died (most from hunger and disease), became the crucible through which the nation passed and was forged into *a people*. But a historicist understanding of the Chaco War also temporally expands the journey into the distant past. By tying the Chaco War experience to other moments of past collective tragedy (e.g. the War of the Pacific, the difficult struggle for independence, the eighteenth century Tupac Katari revolt),

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<sup>82</sup> The Litoral conflict still resonates in the Bolivian national consciousness. Various Bolivian political leaders (both civilian and military) have taken advantage of existing anti-Chilean sentiments to seek popular support. The tenuous Carlos Mesa regime was, in many ways, sustained by his consistent appeals to seek Bolivian sovereign access to the Pacific.

<sup>83</sup> In many ways, Chaco War veterans, and members of the Chaco generation more generally, are afforded special status within Bolivian society, sharing a similar (though much higher) status to members of the “Greatest Generation” (who experienced both the Great Depression and the Second World War) in the United States.

this historicist national narrative extended the national community further into the distant past, thus granting it greater legitimacy. Such a narrative also contributed to the formation of a “collective tragedy” genre, which has frequently dominated popular political discourse. In this discourse, the Chaco War serves as a powerful metaphor for political life: woefully misled by corrupt, irresponsible elites more interested in serving international interests than national ones, the Bolivian people are sentenced to repeatedly struggle in defense of “the national”—in short, the nation suffers a collective martyrdom.

Like other types of narratives, national historical narratives contain both heroes and villains. The Bolivian post-Chaco imaginary includes a pantheon of heroes and martyrs to the national cause.<sup>84</sup> The first great hero-martyr is Germán Busch. The charismatic young dictator, who became the model for future reformist projects and (more importantly) populist leaders, is almost universally viewed in a positive light—as a figure who struggled, in the end in vain, in an attempt to wrest control of the state away from the anti-national elites in the name of the nation. Busch enjoys the status of popular legitimacy not only because he initiated the construction of a national (rather than a “liberal”) state, but also because he personally went through the crucible of the Chaco War. As the war’s most well-known and legitimate war hero, he perhaps best represented the middle class elements of the Chaco generation. The second great martyr, ironically, is Gualberto Villarroel. Despite his regime’s brutal repression and ignominious end, only a few years after his death Villarroel’s reputation was reconstructed by emerging nationalist middle class leaders who had supported him. Rehabilitated, Villarroel represented a nationalist leader betrayed by anti-national elites (both

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<sup>84</sup> The post-1952 period included a series of national monument and museum projects that make the national imaginary “physically present” in everyday life. These include a host of statues, *plazuelas*, and streets named after figures from both post- and pre-Chaco national history.

*rosqueros* and *piristas*) who was brutally and publicly killed by a misguided mob—in short, he became a nationalist Christ figure.

Bolivia's prevalent historicist tradition frequently joins such heroes into an organic, evolutionary succession that represents one consistent narrative strand. And because one can add other figures into this narrative sequence, political leaders have actively included themselves in this national historical sequence. The MNR, and its leaders, not only frequently legitimized themselves by appealing to the Busch and Villarroel regimes, but also successfully included Víctor Paz Estenssoro into this pantheon.<sup>85</sup> The lasting appeal of such myths is noticeable: The most recent official history of the MNR (Bedregal 2002) sports a color photo of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, flanked on each side by bronze busts of Villarroel and Paz Estenssoro. Likewise, Hugo Banzer's biographers never fail to mention the young Banzer's fateful meeting with Busch.<sup>86</sup> Almost invariably, apologists for different regimes (whether civilian or military) have tied their project to one or more of the key national heroes and called the regime a continuation or restoration of the nationalist

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<sup>85</sup> The Plaza de Heroes in La Paz is marked by two massive and imposing stone sculptures: the first is a stylized *monolito* (a sort of Andean stone "totem pole"); the other is the head of Paz Estenssoro, carved in similar style. The Plaza de Heroes, in many ways, is the heart of "the Bolivian street" since it serves as the meeting place for protest gatherings (sometimes self-described as "popular" or "national" assemblies) and the starting point for marches to the capitol buildings.

<sup>86</sup> According to the story, Busch (while traveling through "the provinces") met a then-adolescent Banzer and declared the boy "destined to do great things" for the *patria*, which led Banzer (with Busch's sponsorship) to enroll in the military academy. Another telling incident involves Banzer's attendance at Paz Estenssoro's 2001 funeral, which was nationally televised. On approaching the casket, Banzer laid a small ADN party flag over Paz Estenssoro. The controversial move was denounced by many *movimientistas*, though Banzer himself declared himself a loyal "son of the revolution" and life-long friend to Paz Estenssoro. Nevertheless, the move was clearly meant to symbolically tie Paz Estenssoro to Banzer in hopes of positioning Banzer and ADN as heirs of the 1952 National Revolution (a status that the MNR has consistently worked hard to confer only upon itself).



project—a project such authors claim was “interrupted” by an intervening (and “anti-national”) regime.<sup>87</sup>

The new nationalist discourse was consciously both anti-liberal and anti-capitalist.<sup>88</sup> Sharply critical of the liberal republic’s emphasis on individual rights (limited, of course, to a minority of the population), the post-Chaco discourse was, like many nationalist discourses, strongly communitarian and corporatist. Not surprisingly, the so-called “1952 State” was built on a corporatist social order and gave precedence to collective (sectoral), rather than individual rights. Similarly, the new constitutional order introduced the concept of “social utility” as a key function of property—the “social use” of land trumped considerations of individual property rights. It was in this context that the nationalization of key industries (particularly mining and hydrocarbons) was undertaken. After the 1980s, the transition to liberal democracy and the neoliberal economic restructuring that came with it, not surprisingly, dramatically altered the political status quo. While the post-Chaco nationalist discourse had been anti-liberal, corporatist, and anti-capitalist, the new democratic regime strived to be liberal, pluralist, and capitalist.

By the later phase of the democratization process (post-1985), members of the political class had adopted a new, liberal-pluralist political discourse that fundamentally reimagined the role of the Bolivian state, its relationship to its citizens, and the nature of Bolivian citizenship, as they sought to consolidate a “new collective imaginary” (F. Mayorga 1993, p. 168). This new discourse became the prevailing language of politics among the

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<sup>87</sup> Most recently, in various public statements, Evo Morales has tied his own regime’s political reforms—particularly his May 2006 nationalization of the hydrocarbons industry—to the 1952 revolutionary project.

<sup>88</sup> Interestingly, the term “liberal” was (like *rosquero*) given a negative connotation by nationalists, particularly during the 1930s and 1940s. The language used to denounce the liberal republican regimes and their political elites by nationalists was, in many ways, similar to the kind used by anti-neoliberal dissidents (e.g. Evo Morales).

political parties that dominated formal, electoral politics through the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>89</sup>

Anthropologists Kevin Healy and Susan Paulson (2000) also argue that the 1993-1997 political reforms introduced a “reconstruction” of collective identities that, while “more sensitive to issues of identity politics” (p. 2), nevertheless produced led to consequences unintended by the reforms’ architects. By making pluralist issues of identity politics a cornerstone of the 1993-1997 reforms, Bolivian policymakers eroded the basis of a national “Bolivian” identity.

The democratization process prompted new reimaginings of Bolivian nationalisms by opening the *demos* question. Just as nations are imagined political communities, so too are democracies. Like nations, individuals also construct democracies (in part) through a collective agreement that they are indeed members of a single, sovereign community (and not two or more such communities). Unlike other types of political communities, democracies are more open (and vulnerable) to ongoing deconstruction of their *demos* question.<sup>90</sup> By 2002, tensions between sharply different and competing evolving national imaginaries, and political institutions little able to manage them, produce a political crisis.

### **The Legacy of Populism**

Another common thread that ties Bolivian politics from the 1930s through the 1970s is the dominance of populism as a political strategy.<sup>91</sup> In large measure, this was a product of

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<sup>89</sup> After 1985, both ADN and MNR adopted a “neoliberal” economic discourse; by 1989 MIR also accepted the basic neoliberal economic model. All three parties also embraced pluralist positions, which reached their zenith with the 1993-1997 reforms.

<sup>90</sup> The relationship between democracy and the nation is expanded in Chapter 2.

<sup>91</sup> In following Mitchell’s (1977) use of the term “populism” I am emphasizing the MNR leadership’s common program aimed at integrating formerly excluded social groups, social and political reforms meant to decrease

the post-Chaco national revolutionary discourse. But it was also, as Mitchell (1977) argues, the product of a series of decisions made by elite leaders as they sought to seize and retain power.<sup>92</sup> Though populism and *caudillismo* are, of course, region-wide phenomena, the development of modern Bolivian populism coincided with an unprecedented expansion of political participation. Radicalized by the Chaco War experience, and hoping to transform the Bolivian state, the middle-class members of the Chaco generation sought allies in their struggle against the *ancien régime* elite. The kind of alliance structures developed between the middle classes and other classes (particularly labor and the *campesinos*) had significant consequences for Bolivia's later political development.<sup>93</sup>

Modern Bolivian populism can be traced to the Busch regime.<sup>94</sup> While Busch did not engage in mass mobilization (traditionally the hallmark of populist movements), he laid out the political program or agenda that later movements—particularly the MNR—would pursue. Additionally, Busch did rely (especially in the early stages) on support from middle

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inequality and increase civic inclusion, and a marked (if moderate) nationalist orientation. Though most treatments of populism focus on the role of populist leaders, Mitchell's definition is not incompatible with those put forward by Kurt Weyland (1995; 2001), Benjamin Arditi (2005), Ernesto Laclau (2005), or Francisco Panizza (2005). In all such accounts, populism is conceptually attached to an organicist understand of "the people" (the *demos*) represented by a leader that stands both "with" and "above" the people. In all such discussions, populism is most readily identified not with an organization model, but with a rhetorical "style" of politics—one that claims the leader (or organization) speaks directly for "the people" by shifting away from institutionalized politics towards the "democratic imaginary of modern politics" (Arditi 2005, p. 88).

<sup>92</sup> It is important to note that Mitchell recognizes that these choices were, in part, constrained by structural or historical factors, such as the global economy and Bolivia's position regarding the world's great powers.

<sup>93</sup> The importance and implications of different inter-class alliances and relationships for future political development is well established. See Lipset 1963; Moore 1966; and Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992.

<sup>94</sup> The historicist Bolivian accounts previously cited also overwhelmingly accept Busch as the first "modern" Bolivian political statesman and his regime as the start of 20th century political life in Bolivia.

class, loosely organized civilian groups.<sup>95</sup> The military base of the Busch regime has strong parallels to the military-socialist *tenentista* movement in 1920s.<sup>96</sup> Busch's regime can also be compared with the "military populism" of Chile's Carlos Ibáñez and Colombia's Gustavo Rojas, who also relied heavily on personal charisma and pursued radical social and economic reforms while eschewing a broader organizational mass base.<sup>97</sup> By the late 1940s, however, Busch's "military socialist" reformist project was transformed by members of the Chaco generation into a multi-class popular movement.

Members of the Chaco generation developed their collective political power slowly. Participants in the new nationalist movement commonly began by participating in the numerous independent veterans' associations. By the 1940s, several of these evolved into the MNR, which soon became the country's most significant political movement. Unlike other political parties of the post-Chaco period, the MNR was deliberately vague and flexible in its ideological positions—it pursued revolutionary nationalism with little concern for ideological orthodoxy. In contrast, the Marxist left was frequently beset with ideological and doctrinaire splintering, while its emphasis on issues of class limited its acceptance to the middle class.

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<sup>95</sup> The Busch regime saw a burst of new so-called "socialist" movements and parties (though most used "socialist" in the sense popularized by Italian fascism). These included the Confederación Socialista de Bolivia (CSB), the Partido Nacionalista of Hernando Siles Reyes (father of Hernán Siles Zuazo), the new Célula Socialista Revolucionaria (led by Carlos Montenegro), and even a breakaway faction of the Republican Party known as Partido de la Unión Republicana Socialista (PURS). The regime itself would try to build two "official" parties: the Frente Único Socialista in 1937, followed later by the Partido Democrático Socialista (whose membership included Montenegro, Céspedes, and Paz Estenssoro). Each of these movements, however, were primarily limited to a small circle of middle class, urban members of the Chaco generation.

<sup>96</sup> The Brazilian military movement was spearheaded by young military officers (Luís Carlos Prestes is the most famous). While more ideologically socialist than Busch's collaborators, many of the young *tenentes* would later join the more traditionally populist Getúlio Vargas regime.

<sup>97</sup> See Mitchell 1977, p. 134-136.

The left's ideological commitment to the international Marxist-socialist movement also left it vulnerable to attacks from nationalists that the left was "anti-national"—accusations that plagued PIR, particularly after its government participation during the *sexenio*.

In general, the Busch regime fit the style of a "revolution from above." In large measure, it was Busch's personal charisma that made him an appealing icon—much like his better-known contemporaries, Juan Perón in Argentina and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil.<sup>98</sup> Yet differences with the Argentine and Brazilian cases are significant. Unlike the former, the Busch regime came on the heels of defeat in a military war, and one in which Germán Busch was a well-known, popular hero. More than Perón or Vargas, Busch insulated himself from civil society and did not engage in mass politics. Thus, Busch offered an ambiguous model (he could be invoked both by the left and the right) of a "revolutionary" regime centered on the personal virtue of a heroic, anti-political leader.<sup>99</sup>

The Busch regime also served as an incubator for the revolutionary nationalist movement. Several of those who would go on to play key roles in the MNR began their political careers during this time, often as delegates to the 1938 constitutional convention or civilian bureaucrats. Most prominent among these was an otherwise obscure lawyer and war

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<sup>98</sup> The Busch regime coincides with the Vargas regime (1930-1945) and predates the Perón regime (1946-1955). There are important differences with these regimes. Unlike Busch, Vargas came from an aristocratic family and entered political life before his 1930 revolution. Busch in many ways better resembled Perón, who was also from a recent-immigrant background and uninvolved in politics before 1943 (when he participated in an officers' coup). Unlike Perón, however, Busch did not come to power on the back of popular mass support—but rather by directly seizing power.

<sup>99</sup> For discussions of the Busch regime and its impact, see Céspedes 1956, Antezana 1965, Durán 1996.

veteran from Tarija, Víctor Paz Estenssoro.<sup>100</sup> The swift ascendance of the MNR shortly after its founding is in large measure explained by its early leaders' connection to the Busch legacy.<sup>101</sup> As anti-establishment parties continued to gain ground after the 1940 election, the MNR provided a movement that both clearly articulated the aims of the Chaco generation and rejected an ideological Marxist position. In following years, the ability of the young nationalist leaders to capitalize on (and shape) the growing Busch mythos helped them to expand their support among the middle classes, largely by retaining vague ideological commitments and a flexible national-populist orientation.

The emerging national revolutionary movement, like the Busch regime itself, had a decidedly corporatist-fascist tendency. This reflected the contemporary popularity of Mussolini's regime throughout Latin America.<sup>102</sup> Internationally, both Busch and the MNR supported the Axis powers. But this was in part a reaction to the close ties between the tin industry magnates and the "imperial" interests of the United States and Great Britain. At first, the Marxist PIR and POR joined the MNR in condemning the Concordancia governments' efforts to increase tin production in support of the Allied war effort. Only

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<sup>100</sup> Other notable future MNR members included Augusto Céspedes, Carlos Montenegro, Waldo Alvarez, José Cuadros Quiroga, and Hernán Siles Zuazo. All were middle class war veterans, most having served as non-commissioned officers.

<sup>101</sup> Alongside their common national-revolutionary ambitions, their participation in the Busch regime gave future MNR leaders their first access to political power—access previously limited to members of the middle class—as well as a space in which to organize their future inter-personal political networks.

<sup>102</sup> The Italian fascist movement similarly articulated the demands of that country's veterans and represented a similar "generational" movement. The relationship between the MNR and international fascism is, of course, complex. I would note that, like many similar movements in 1930s and 1940s Latin America (e.g. Brazil's Estado Novo), such tendencies more closely resembled Italian fascism than German Nazism. Italian fascism also closely resembled Latin American corporatist-populism. See Weber 1985, Dos Santos 1972, Mann 2004, and Griffin 1991.

after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 did the PIR and POR support the Allied cause.<sup>103</sup> The move led to a decline in support for Marxist alternatives, which were now accused of anti-national, *entreguista* behavior. The result was that the nationalist MNR—not the Marxist parties—became the standard-bearer for opposition to the *ancien régime* and the liberal republic.

The Villarroel regime marked a continued civil-military partnership modeled on the Busch legacy.<sup>104</sup> RADEPA represented one of the most ardently nationalist of the numerous semi-secret *logias* that emerged from the Chaco War. What bound *logia* members together was their shared war experience—a bond also shared by the young MNR founders. The Villarroel regime was even more closely tied to civilian political support, principally, the MNR. At this stage, the party served principally as a social network, joining various smaller, independent groups. The 1943 putsch, however, demonstrated that the national revolutionary leaders were not yet prepared to use full mass mobilization. The regime thus resembled the Busch regime (and other contemporary authoritarian regimes) even though it relied more on an organizational structure than on mere personalism. The key lesson from the 1943 RADEPA-MNR putsch, however, was that less than three years after its founding, the MNR was able to help organize and execute a government's overthrow.

The regime's ignominious end did not signal the end of the MNR. Within a short time, the party regained its status as the vanguard of the national revolutionary movement. In part, this was due to careful rehabilitation of Villarroel's legacy. But continued missteps by

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<sup>103</sup> Some POR factions continued to oppose low tin export prices and moved closer into alignment with the MNR.

<sup>104</sup> The Busch-Toro coup was also a joint civilian-military putsch. Shortly after the Chaco War ended, Busch formed the Legión de Ex-Combatientes (LEC) and began gathering sympathetic active-duty military officers and middle class war veterans.

the Marxist left were certainly significant. PIR leaders not only helped organize Villarroel's overthrow, they also participated in the subsequent *sexenio* governments. Because these were clearly hostile to labor, *pirista* participation effectively severed the party's ties to the organized labor unions—especially after the Thesis of Pulacayo.<sup>105</sup> In short time, the MNR was able to build ties with labor leaders and establish party cells within the mineworkers' syndicates. Only the pro-Lechín factions of POR actively opposed to the *sexenio*. But by dismissing electoral politics as “bourgeois democracy” and refusing to compete in elections, the POR ceded its electoral terrain to the MNR.

During the *sexenio*, the MNR leadership further developed its concept of a broad, multi-class popular alliance, describing itself as a *movimiento nacional policlasista*. As the military purged officers with *movimientista* sympathies, the MNR had to rely on popular mobilization. But because its leadership was still committed to armed insurrection as a possible avenue for a national revolution, the MNR was organized less as a political party and more as a clandestine insurrectionist movement: the party adopted a Leninist organizational model, organizing into semi-autonomous *células* and *comandos regionales*. The September 1949 and May 1950 uprisings demonstrated the ability to mobilize popular forces against the government.<sup>106</sup> In particular, the 1950 La Paz factory workers' revolt revealed the MNR's dominant position within the labor movement. By 1950, the MNR was the only political organization that could count on widespread popular support. Nevertheless, its ideological

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<sup>105</sup> Following this period, and into the 1970s, the term *pirista* joined *rosquero* and *entreguista* as negative political terms. Specifically, *pirista* has two possible meanings: the first implies a blind political naiveté that unwittingly hands power to “anti-nationalist” or “imperialist” forces; the second implies a deliberate deception by self-serving political figures.

<sup>106</sup> The MNR uprisings also clearly resemble similar civilian uprisings by Peru's APRA (1932) and Venezuela's AD (1945).



position remained vague as the party broadened its support by appealing to a variety of sectors, particularly among the middle classes and organized labor.

Once in power, however, the MNR leadership sought to demobilize—or at least neutralize—the popular bases. The factionalism encouraged by Siles Zuazo and Paz Estenssoro weakened the regime's ties to civil society through a process of political deinstitutionalization. Though power was concentrated in the party's central leadership, the failure to consolidate a political apparatus meant that Bolivian political authority was highly personalized. In contrast, an equally divided Mexican revolutionary leadership successfully consolidated political authority into an apparatus—the PRI—that transformed Mexico into a one-party corporatist state.<sup>107</sup> The MNR retained the loose structure of a populist alliance of different, independent social sectors (the middle classes, labor, *campesinos*, etc.) but did not successfully forge a single political structure. Meanwhile, the central leadership continued to pursue middle class interests while retaining the loose—and often contradictory—populist rhetoric of the 1940s. Internal struggles within the MNR leadership demonstrated that even key members of the party held sharp ideological disagreements. In time, the various MNR factions sought to mobilize key popular sectors against each other.

By the mid-1950s, the *campesinos* constituted the country's most powerful social bloc. Though only marginally involved in pre-1952 politics, their spontaneous mobilization on behalf of land reform made them a potential threat to the new MNR regime. Recognizing land reform as a *fait accompli*, the leadership incorporated land reform and other demands into their populist program and rhetoric, deliberately co-opting the movement. As a voting bloc, their support for official MNR candidates ensured landslide victories. In the rural

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<sup>107</sup> See Selbin 1999.

*campesinos*, several MNR leaders also found a useful blunt instrument to wield against the COB and organized labor. But the regime's increased reliance on repression also increased the role of the new military. By the 1960s, close ties had developed between several military officers and rural *campesino* leaders. Absent a consolidated, institutionalized state authority, any political leader who could control (or neutralize) the *campesinos* could control the state.

The military regimes that governed Bolivia from 1964 to 1978 continued using a populist strategy. Beyond appealing directly to the rhetoric of the national revolution, none of these sought to institutionalize their regime. Like Busch and Villarroel before, they were willing to use civilian politicians as allies, but in the end pursued personalist strategies. While in power, none seriously tried to establish an independent political party. Beginning with Barrientos, these regimes also encouraged anti-Chilean xenophobia and ultra-nationalism. Such appeals fit easily into the post-revolutionary national imaginary and could easily stir popular sentiment. In short, despite their different policy orientation, each of these regimes mobilized popular sentiment, but not popular participation.

Despite their differences, the Barrientos, Ovando, and Torres regimes adopted similar populist strategies. Neither was pure military regime.<sup>108</sup> Instead, they relied co-opting support from popular sectors with active participation by MNR factional leaders. Rather than a break from the previous mode of politics, the three regimes marked the search for a new populist coalition. The Barrientos regime was the most personalist of the regimes, relying extensively on the dictator's frequent visits to the countryside to rally his *campesino* supporters. Nevertheless, *campesino* organizations remained weak, factionalized, and dependent on their loyalty to the regime's leader. And despite the formation of electoralist

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<sup>108</sup> According to Malloy, Bolivia's armed forces had not developed "an institutional doctrine regarding national reality and the role of the military within it" nor "a minimal notion of corporate identity" (1977, p. 478).

vehicles, there was little binding the regime together, which disintegrated upon his death. Ovando and Torres pursued similar strategies. Though Ovando was more in line with the Estenssoro *movimientista* wing and Torres was more in line with the Siles Zuazo and Lechín wings, neither sought to institutionalize their regime—either by handing power back to civilian control or giving the military full political control. Instead, all three regimes followed a policy of co-opting different political figures—whether from MNR factions or other political organizations—under a populist, multi-sectoral coalition.

The Banzer regime also began as military-civilian, populist alliance—though focusing on the more conservative, middle-class elements within the post-1952 MNR. The *campesinos* and labor were kept fragmented. In many ways, the first three years of the Banzer regime closely resembled the kind of middle-class, populist government of the first Paz Estenssoro government. Only in 1974 did Banzer break the tradition of military-civilian governments to install an all-military dictatorship. Though after 1974 Banzer's regime closely resembled the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes common throughout the region, the *banzerato* was profoundly personalistic.<sup>109</sup> Banzer's political style in many ways modeled that of Busch—another German-immigrant colonel. Over all, the seven-year Banzer dictatorship was a combination of nationalism and middle-class populism.

Instead of creating a new political party, the Banzer regime only kept the existing parties and factions at bay. By 1978, popular demands for a democratic opening were channeled principally through the same political elites that had dominated post-Chaco politics—all of whom claimed to represent the true spirit and values of the national

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<sup>109</sup> In sharp contrast, the Argentine bureaucratic-authoritarian regime was never clearly identified with any one specific military figure, but rather by a series of military juntas. Perhaps the Pinochet regime in Chile (1973-1990) or the Alfredo Stroessner regime in Paraguay (1954-1989) most closely resembled the Banzer regime.

revolution. The lack of the Banzer regime's institutionalization was evident when, after Banzer stepped down in 1978, factional divisions within the military contributed to a turbulent four years. Only in 1979, more than a year after leaving office, did Banzer found a political party—Acción Democrática Nacionalista (ADN). The center-right party, however, was highly centralized around the person of Banzer, the party's perennial presidential candidate.<sup>110</sup>

The legacy of post-Chaco populism significantly affected Bolivia's democratization process. After the military returned to its barracks, the civilian political elite that managed post-1982 politics represented the previous national revolutionary factions. Between 1978 and 1985 various MNR factions split away from the "historic" Paz Estenssoro wing—including faction led by key members of the party's central leadership. But all three of the major political forces during the democratic transition, while appealing to the symbols and rhetoric of the national revolution, focused on the personality of their leaders. The MNR appealed to the memory of Paz Estenssoro, its presidential candidate in 1978, 1979, 1980, and 1985. Siles Zuazo, the orchestrator of the 1949 and 1952 uprisings, led the UDP. Banzer's new Acción Democrática Nacionalista (ADN), likewise, focused exclusively on the former dictator's personal charisma.

There were several consequences—particularly for the new democracy's party system: First, none of the post-democratization parties developed an institutionalized party apparatus independent of the party *jefe*. Second, each of the parties continued to pursue top-down mobilization strategies, limiting popular participation to elections, often with co-option strategies meant to secure the support of local *caudillos* that could deliver votes.

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<sup>110</sup> Not surprisingly, ADN imploded shortly after Banzer's death, virtually disappearing only months after his death (7 August 2002).

Consequently, party's lacked strong roots in civil society. Finally, the populist model was so dominant, that even opposition movements expressed themselves through populist strategies. The result was that political life was still dominated by a small "elevated" political class. While the new "democratized" political class engaged in electoral competition, it appealed directly for popular support—most frequently through populist strategies. But this created an inherent tension in the new democratic system: like stilt-walkers, the Bolivian political class stood above the majority of the population, but their competition kept them vulnerable to forces from below.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE BOLIVIAN MODEL

While the legacies of post-Chaco national imaginary shaped the perception and attitude of Bolivia's political elite, the formal institutional structures in place before the transition to democracy constrained their behavior. If this shared national imaginary provided the basis of legitimacy that "elevated" Bolivia's political class above the rest of the citizen population, the institutional structures provided the rules under which members of the political class moved about on their stilts. By the mid-1980s, Bolivian elites had learned that cooperative strategies helped keep the entire political class safely elevated and that too much jostling might send them all tumbling down. By establishing an elite consensus on the political limits for democratic competition, members of the political class were able to continue to play the stilt-walker game. Later reform efforts—whether meant to increase the size of the playing field or the number of players—made it difficult for elites to keep their balance.

This chapter provides a brief descriptive overview of Bolivia's unique institutional design. I follow René Antonio Mayorga in calling this system "parliamentarized presidentialism" (1997), though others have at times labeled it "assembly-independent" (Shugart and Carey 1992) or "hybrid presidentialism" (Gamarra 1996).<sup>111</sup> There has been

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<sup>111</sup> Shugart and Carey's term is accurately descriptive: though Bolivia's executive was, until recently, elected by the assembly, the executive's power was independent of the assembly (making it different than a parliamentary system, where the executive power depends on continued parliamentary confidence). Gamarra's term is also accurate (since this is, literally, a hybrid system that mixes elements of presidentialism and parliamentarism). But because the term "hybrid presidentialism" is also commonly used to describe the premier-presidentialism

extensive debate in the literature about the role of institutional design in new democracies, with special attention given to the role of executive-legislative relations in presidential democracies (that is, the relationship between presidents and legislatures), as well as the role of political parties and party systems. Much of the contemporary discussion of executive-legislative relations was initiated by Juan Linz (1990; 1994), who argued that presidential systems were inherently unstable and less likely than parliamentary systems to lead to democratic consolidation, especially in Latin America. Such a charge fit well with new institutionalist research, which showed that weak or poorly designed political institutions hindered democratic regimes throughout the region.

Bolivia's model of parliamentarized presidentialism involves a convergence of different political institutional design elements that revolve around the electoral laws and a constitutional provision that, from the 1985 to the 2002 elections, dictated how presidents were elected. These institutional constraints significantly affected the behavior and strategies of political elites, reflected in the type of party system that evolved. Similarly, these institutional constraints influenced the kind of coalition-building norms adopted by political elites. Thus, this chapter:

1. Outlines the Bolivian constitutionally proscribed institutional model of parliamentarized presidentialism in place during the democratic period.
2. Describes the various electoral systems in place during the different electoral periods.
3. Describes the political party system as it has evolved across that time.

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(used in countries such as France, Germany, or Russia) using it to describe Bolivia is merely confusing. I prefer "parliamentarized presidentialism" because it easily describes an otherwise presidential system that is marked by some attributes of parliamentary democracy.

4. Describes the coalition-building norms developed by political elites to craft majoritarian multiparty coalitions.

My method here is primarily descriptive, leaving discussion and analysis of how the system has functioned across different periods for later chapters.

A clear understanding of Bolivian parliamentarized presidentialism is important because this model was the institutional context within which democratic politics was played out between 1985 and 2005. Bolivia's recent crisis is itself currently being resolved on the basis of a December 2005 election that also relied on this institutional framework. If parliamentarized presidentialism is a model that can help produce stable democratic governance, then it is possible that the Bolivian model may prevent the kind of deeper democratic crisis felt in other countries in the region. While some scholars have pointed to Bolivia as a special case (see Linz 1990; Linz 1994; Sartori 1994; Jones 1995; Shugart and Carey 1992), the parliamentarized presidential model has received little direct attention in the comparative literature. There has yet been no major study of the relationship between Bolivia's institutional design and the nearly two decades of political stability the country enjoyed.

It is also important to note what effects recent changes to institutional design have had on Bolivia's democratic system. Thus, this chapter also points out three institutional reforms that altered the internal dynamics of parliamentarized presidentialism in Bolivia:

1. The decentralization of the country with the creation of independent local municipal governments.
2. The adoption of a mixed-member electoral system.
3. The recent decision to grant direct election of the country's nine regional prefects.



All three of these reforms introduced a new local (or regional) dimension to Bolivian politics. This local dimension had two distinct general effects. On the one hand, decentralizing reforms helped deepen Bolivian democracy by increasing local political participation and administrative accountability. On the other hand, these reforms altered the party system by providing incentives for regional or particularist, rather than national, political discourses.

Evidence from Bolivia is relevant for other Latin American cases (e.g. Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela) that have recently undergone a crisis of their party system. After October 2003, the Bolivian party system was clearly in crisis, with traditional (or “systemic”) parties in decline. In large measure, this dissertation suggests that changes in the electoral system altered parties’ bargaining strategies and encouraged polarization, fragmentation, and antagonism. Yet the pre-2003 Bolivian experience suggests that a parliamentarized presidential system limit some of the problems commonly associated with presidentialism without the dramatic (and unlikely) switch to a “pure” parliamentary system. Between 1985 and 2002, Bolivia’s electoral system coincided with a centripetal multiparty system that was both able to accommodate new parties and also encouraged consociational political bargaining. I do not suggest that parliamentarized presidentialism should be adopted, unchanged, by any particular case. Rather, I suggest that a democratic system designed along similar underlying principles could help provide both governmental stability and centripetal political competition. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the Bolivian model may help institutional designers seeking to strengthen and expand democracy throughout the region and beyond.

## Bolivia's Political Geography

Though this dissertation focuses on Bolivia's "general elections" (elections for president and parliament), it is important to understand the country's basic political geography. Bolivia is constitutionally a unitary republic divided (since 1938) into nine departments: La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Potosí, Chuquisaca, Tarija, Santa Cruz, Beni, and Pando.<sup>112</sup> The nine departments are administrative divisions, not sub-governmental divisions; a prefect, who is appointed by the central state, oversees each department.<sup>113</sup> Departments are further subdivided into varying numbers provinces, municipalities, and cantons. Of these smaller subdivisions, only municipalities are significant. The 1994 Ley de Participación Popular created and empowered local municipal governments as semi-autonomous governmental and administrative units.<sup>114</sup> This dissertation, however, does not analyze municipal elections. Rather, this dissertation focuses on the six general elections (1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2002, and 2005) held since the establishment of democracy.

Attention to Bolivia's nine departments is important because these also constitute the country's chief electoral districts. A discussion of how these districts are part of the electoral system follows later in this chapter. Here, I wish to note that these departments also coincide with geographic and cultural regions. For a topographical and political map of

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<sup>112</sup> At its founding in 1826, the country had five administrative departments: Chuquisaca, La Paz, Potosí, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. That same year, Oruro was created as a separate administrative department. Tarija was created in 1831, Beni in 1842, and Pando in 1938.

<sup>113</sup> Although the 2005 election included elections for prefect, the departmental prefectures are still constitutionally bound to serve as representatives of the central state in their department. And while they were elected by popular vote, they could (in theory) be removed from office by the chief executive.

<sup>114</sup> Before 1994, municipalities were primarily known as *secciones de provincia* (sections of province) and were merely smaller administrative units within the prefecture system. Except for large cities (department capitals), there were no municipal elections until 1995.

Bolivia, see page vii. Geographically, Bolivia is often divided into four regional “zones” which cross department lines (see Romero Ballivián 2003).

1. The Altiplano highlands cover most of La Paz, Oruro, and Potosí. These areas are high in the Andean plateau and have a large percentage of indigenous populations (Aymara in the north & Quechua in the south).

2. The Cordillera Real and valleys cover most of Cochabamba, northeast La Paz, east Potosí, and the western portions of Chuquisaca and Tarija. These areas are on the eastern slopes of the Andes and also have a significant indigenous (principally Quechua) population.

3. The Amazon and tropical savannahs cover most of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, northern La Paz (the Yungas), and eastern Cochabamba (the Chapare). These areas are in the lowlands of the Amazon basin and have smaller native indigenous population (Guarani-speakers are the most numerous of these).<sup>115</sup>

4. The Chaco region covers the eastern half of Tarija and Chuquisaca, as well as a significant portion of southern Santa Cruz. These are in the lowland Chaco basin that borders Paraguay and also have smaller native indigenous populations.

For the sake of simplification, I have divided departments into two categories: Andean and *media luna*. While this classification is somewhat reductionist, it coincides with the current Bolivian political lexicon, which uses these terms to describe the country’s regional cleavage. I also use the term “*media luna*” without giving it any normative value. While “eastern lowlands” is an alternate categorization for those departments, the term is

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<sup>115</sup> Migration from western Andean regions (the Altiplano and Cordillera Real) towards the lowlands has been significant. Interestingly, these immigrants tend to assimilate into lowland culture, rather than emphasize their “indigenoussness” (as with immigrants to the Andean cities), with the notable exception of those who migrated to Cochabamba’s Chapare region.

problematic because some of the *media luna* departments are neither in the east, nor in the lowlands. Similarly, the term “Andean” is here used more in a cultural (as opposed to a geographical) sense. Both political elites and voters in those departments tend to clearly articulate themselves as being culturally “Andean,” even if they live in geographically “lowland” regions (e.g. the Yungas and Chapare).

In this dissertation, “Andean” departments are the four departments located principally in the Altiplano and Cordillera Real regions: La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, and Potosí. Though the territory of two of these (La Paz and Cochabamba) spills over into the Amazon lowlands, overall voting behavior is significantly internally consistent. In Cochabamba, the lowlands have been “colonized” (the term Bolivians use to refer to state-sponsored migrations starting in the mid-twentieth century) by former miners and farmers from the Altiplano. Voting patterns in the Chapare region have retained an Andean orientation. Though voters in the far northern provinces of La Paz are more consistent with voters in Pando, these provinces are sparsely populated and have virtually no impact on department-level voting results.

I consider the “*media luna*” departments to include Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, and Tarija. Although part of Tarija’s territory sits along the Cordillera Real, the department’s political orientation has historically had a different one than Andean Bolivia; it has also steadily shifted into alignment with the lowland departments, most notably Santa Cruz.

I have left Chuquisaca as an ambivalent department that, though in many ways Andean, has (like Tarija) often shifted away from Andean voting patterns. The department is dropped out of the statistical models, unless clearly specified.

There are other marked differences between Andean and *media luna* departments. While the Andean departments still hold a higher share of the national population (nearly

two thirds), their share of the population has steadily declined with the rapid growth in the lowlands—particularly the accelerated growth rate of the city of Santa Cruz (which is now the most populous city in the country). The population growth is in part a continuation of post-1952 migration patterns encouraged by the 1952-1964 MNR governments. The *media luna* departments also share a history of neglect from the central state, with most political and economic power historically resting in Andean Bolivia. This has dramatically changed in the last three decades, however, as their economic growth (particularly in Santa Cruz and Tarija) has outpaced net national economic growth and development.

The two decades of democratic politics witnessed a dramatic shift in economic and political power towards lowland departments and away from Andean departments. Between 1980 and 2002, the presidential election winner in Andean departments was not elected; in contrast, between 1985 and 2002, the presidential winner in the *media luna* was chosen president. The growing political, economic, and cultural rift between the Andes and the lowlands has prompted many to speak about “the two Bolivias”—a discourse that has allowed lingering secessionist sentiment in some departments to gain a new audience.

### **Bolivia’s Three Institutional Periods**

I divide Bolivia’s democratic experience into three distinct institutional periods (or “cases”), each coinciding with a different set of elections. The first period starts with the transition to democracy and includes the 1985, 1989, and 1993 elections. This period immediately followed the country’s transition to democracy and witnessed the emergence of a relatively stable party system that revolved around three major parties: the MNR, ADN, and MIR. This period also consolidated the basic political strategies that mark the system of parliamentarized presidentialism. This period is discussed in Chapter 5.

The second period includes the 1997 and 2002 elections. Although the party system was already beginning to fragment by the 1993 election, the dynamics of the 1997 and 2002 elections were different. A series of institutional reforms during the first Sánchez de Lozada administration (1993-1997) significantly altered the rules of the game. The introduction of a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system, as well as the municipalization of the country, increased the incentives for regionalized politics. This period is marked by three events: the continuous erosion in support for the systemic political parties (the MNR, ADN, and MIR) that had dominated the previous period; an increase in party fragmentation and polarization; and a geographic political shift as parties increasingly became entrenched in regional constituencies. This period is discussed in Chapter 6.

The third period encompasses the recent political crisis and the 2005 election. Although it used the same electoral rules as the 1997 and 2002 elections, the 2005 election was the first in which none of the systemic parties was a substantial force during the campaign (only one, the MNR, even put forward a list of candidates). The 2005 election was also marked by a congruence of political forces around two electoral lists: Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and Poder Democrático y Social (Podemos). This current period was marked by two events: the first direct popular election of a president since democratization and the possible emergence of a two-party system. The direct election of departmental prefects in 2005 also substantially altered Bolivian politics. While the recently installed Evo Morales government is beyond the scope of this dissertation (which uses his inauguration as the end-point for analysis), there is little doubt that the 2005 election has significantly altered Bolivia's political landscape. This period is discussed in Chapter 7.

The remainder of this chapter gives a more detailed outline of Bolivia's institutional design, and its changes, during all three periods. While there have been dramatic changes

over the course of six elections, the overall institutional framework for democratic politics in Bolivia has, in most ways, remained the same. In part, some of these are historical legacies, such as the organizational nature of Bolivian political parties. Others, have been learned and carried over from one institutional period to the next, such as the coalition-building strategies based on power-sharing quotas established between allied political parties.

Finally, Bolivia still retains its basic parliamentarized presidentialism framework, despite significant changes to the electoral system across the years. Although Evo Morales was elected directly (with 53.7% of the valid popular vote), he could have been forced to seek the presidency through a parliamentary vote; and depending on how many fewer votes he received, he might not have been able to manage a parliamentary majority without seeking a political alliance (meaning, conversely, that his opponents could have formed an alliance government to shut him out). If general elections are held as scheduled in 2010, and if the constitutional and legal provisions for parliamentarized presidentialism remain unaltered by the upcoming constituent assembly (to be elected July 2006), it is unlikely that another candidate would win a majority of the popular vote in a free and fair election. Thus, understanding the institutional framework of parliamentarized presidentialism is important, not only for understanding past Bolivian politics, but also for predictions about the country's political future.

### **Parliamentarized Presidentialism**

The Bolivian system of “parliamentarized presidentialism” is distinguished by three key characteristics:

1. The election of the president by the legislature.

2. The use of a fused ballot that binds presidential and parliamentary candidates in single, closed party list.<sup>116</sup>

3. Coalition-building norms that ensure multiparty majoritarian government.

The first two are described in constitutional provisions and legal statutes; the third is based on informal rules of the game accepted by political elites after 1985. Ostensibly, a presidential candidate could be elected by direct popular vote if his or her party list won an absolute electoral majority (50% + 1). Only when no candidate's party list wins a majority of the popular vote does parliament intervene to select the new president. Essentially, the constitutional provision (spelled out in Article 90 of the Constitution) acts in place of a "second round" election between the top presidential candidates. But because the assembly that selects the president during this second round is closely tied to presidential candidate party lists, the constitutional provision is substantially different than a simple electoral college. In effect, the fusing of presidential and parliamentary elections into a single closed-list ballot makes the electoral system closely resemble (and behave like) a parliamentary electoral system. To win a parliamentary majority, candidates and their parties seek to build multiparty coalitions. After 1985, coalition-building strategies and negotiations developed into a set of informal norms that affected how parties competed against each other during the electoral campaign.

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<sup>116</sup> I use "parliament" to describe the Bolivian legislature. While the legislative body (when referring to both the House of Deputies and the Senate) is officially called the National Congress, Bolivians most often refer to the body as *el parlamento*. Individual members are most frequently identified as either *diputado* or *senador*.



## Parliamentary Election of the Executive

The election of the president by parliament is done by joint, public session of the newly elected parliament. The vote becomes the representative body's first order of business and is an oral vote, taken by roll call. In case of a tie, the delegates vote twice more, until a presidential candidate wins a majority of parliamentary votes (delegates can abstain).<sup>117</sup> If, after the third and final vote, no candidate has yet won an absolute majority, then the candidate who won a plurality of the popular vote is named president. The provision for parliamentary election of the chief executive was first introduced in the 1851 Constitution, though at least one recent account erroneously credits it as being introduced in 1956 (when the 1947 Constitution was ratified).<sup>118</sup> The provision was used only once in the nineteenth century and twice in the 1940s. Despite several new constitutions and constitutional reforms since 1851, the provision was little changed. The form adopted in 1878 remained in place until the 1994 constitutional reforms (which became the 1995 Constitution). For a comparison of changes to this provision over time, see Table 4.1.

Interestingly, the provision for parliamentary election of the executive was not immediately used by Bolivia's political elites during the transition to democracy. Following the 1979 and 1980 elections, disagreement among rival political leaders made parliamentary election of a president difficult. Rather than electing a president, both the 1979 and 1980 parliaments instead appointed an interim executive charged with holding new elections. The

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<sup>117</sup> Delegates can also cast "spoiled" ballots by voting for names not on the prescribed list of eligible candidates.

<sup>118</sup> The 2005 *Elections in the Americas* data handbook entry on Bolivia (written by, Jorge Lazarte, former head of Bolivian National Electoral Court) briefly mentions that the provision for parliamentary election of the president was introduced in "the constitution of 1956" (see p. 127), by which he must mean the 1947 Constitution, which was ratified in 1956.

restoration of civilian government in 1982 followed a political agreement by members of the 1980 parliament to select as president Hernán Siles Zuazo, the plurality winner in both the 1979 and 1980 elections. In each of the five elections between 1985 and 2002, parliament was called upon to select the new president. Only in 2005 did a presidential candidate win an absolute majority of votes, making the parliamentary election of the president unnecessary. Nevertheless, with few expecting any candidate to win an absolute majority in 2005, speculation about how parliament would vote was rampant.

Table 4.1

Constitutional provisions outlining parliamentary election of the executive

Constitution	Articles	Provision
1851	68, 69	If no presidential candidate obtains an absolute majority, the legislature names one of the three candidates with the most popular votes. If no candidate obtains a two-thirds supermajority in parliament, delegates vote again from among the two candidates with the most popular votes. Voting continues, in permanent session, until a candidate receives the necessary supermajority.
1861	48, 49	Parliamentary voting is limited to three times (the second two between the two candidates with the most popular votes). If after three votes no candidate is selected, the winner is decided by chance.
1868	63	No change.
1871	65, 66	No change.
1878	85, 86	Election by parliament only requires an absolute majority; voting continues until a candidate wins an absolute majority.
1938	87	No change.
1945	88	No change.
1947	88	No change.
1967	90	No change.
1995	90	Parliament chooses from the two candidates with the most popular votes. If no candidate wins a parliamentary majority, the plurality winner of the popular vote is declared president.
2004	90	No change.

Prior to the 1994 constitutional reforms (Law 1585), which became the 1995 Constitution, parliament was empowered to select a president from among the top three presidential candidates. The change streamlined the selection process to make a potential parliamentary impasse less likely and was also clearly aimed at preventing a repeat of the 1989 election. That year, a deadlock in parliament between the two front-runners, Hugo Banzer and Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, was broken when parliament selected the third-place candidate, Jaime Paz Zamora.<sup>119</sup> The 1994 modification of Article 90, however, was a compromise solution. After 1989, the three major parties (ADN, MNR, and MIR) advanced different proposals to modify the presidential election. Both ADN and MIR advocated presidential election by simple plurality, rather than absolute majority. The MNR, in contrast, advocated a French-style runoff election, where voters would chose between the top two candidates. In the end, neither proposal was adopted, leaving parliamentary election of the executive the default compromise choice, though it was modified to limit parliament to vote between the two candidates with the most popular votes.

### **The Electoral System**

The use of a fused ballot, closed list electoral system means that votes cast for presidential candidates also determines party seat distributions in the country's nine electoral districts. This subtle difference distinguishes parliamentarized presidentialism from other so-

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<sup>119</sup> Sánchez de Lozada was the 1989 plurality winner (by a slim margin) over Banzer. But with parliamentary parties divided almost into thirds, none of the three candidates was willing to give up the presidency. Since an impasse would make Sánchez de Lozada president, Banzer ordered his party's deputies and senators to vote for Paz Zamora, with whom he crafted a political agreement that gave ADN (and Banzer) a powerful role in the government administration.

called “hybrid” or “mixed” systems. Bolivia’s system is thus parliamentarized, unlike 1932-1973 Chile (which also allowed for the legislative assembly to elect the president if no candidate won a clear majority).<sup>120</sup> Bolivia’s system is also more presidential than post-1996 Israel (in which prime ministers are elected by direct popular election).<sup>121</sup> That a subtle difference such as ballot structure could have profound consequences implies that constitutional engineers could achieve substantive changes with minor institutional reforms. The constitutional provision for legislative election of the president encouraged (among political elites) a culture of negotiated bargaining that, from 1985 through 2002, produced stable, majoritarian coalition government. Multipartism, coupled with the use of proportional representation formulas, has meant that Bolivian presidents from 1985 through 2002 were chosen after intense coalition-building negotiations. These parliamentary features qualify the Bolivian system as a true hybrid.

Despite various changes to the seat distribution formulas, presidential and parliamentary candidate lists have remained joined and closed. Political parties have a legal monopoly on candidate nominations and draw up lists (headed by presidential candidates) through any internal nomination mechanisms of their choice.

Before the adoption of a mixed-member electoral system in 1994 (first used in the 1997 election), voters were given a simple ballot with the names of presidential candidates, the candidates’ pictures, and the name, colors, and symbols of the candidates’ political

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<sup>120</sup> Chile’s system was not “parliamentarized” because it still included separate elections for the president and assembly. The ability of the legislature to elect a president did not eliminate the problem of dual legitimacy (voters cast votes for presidential and legislative candidates independently) and did not include strong coalition-building incentives.

<sup>121</sup> Israel’s parliamentary system is not “presidentialized” despite the separate election of executive because the prime minister is still subject to votes of confidence.

parties. Voters marked a simple check box under their presidential candidate choice.

Beginning in 1997, voters faced two vote choices: the first for the presidential candidate and the second for their “uninominal” representative to the House of Deputies (just over half the chamber is elected directly by popular vote in single-seat districts).<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, the final composition of parliament depended on the “presidential” portion of the ballot. Since the 1994 reforms adopted an MMP electoral system, the remaining lower house seats were compensatory seats awarded based on a proportional representation formula.<sup>123</sup> The Senate is still elected entirely based on the presidential vote. Likewise, political parties retain a monopoly on candidate nomination.<sup>124</sup>

Party seat distribution is determined by votes in nine electoral districts corresponding to Bolivia’s nine administrative departments. Each department is guaranteed three senators. The party with the most votes in each department is awarded two senators; the party with the second most votes is awarded one senator. Seats in the House of Deputies are awarded based on the departments’ relative population (based on the most recent census). The same electoral formula is used in each department, regardless of the number of their total number of deputies. Thus, larger departments tend to have more proportional outcomes (and a

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<sup>122</sup> Representatives elected to the House of Deputies are differentiated by how they are elected. Those elected directly from single-seat districts are called *uninominales*; those elected by proportional representation are called *plurinominales*.

<sup>123</sup> This electoral system is also sometimes referred to as the additional member system (AMS).

<sup>124</sup> Changes to the constitution in 2004 (Law 2631) ended the monopoly of political parties as the instruments of representative democracy. These were changes superficial changes, however. The new provision expands representative democracy to “parties, civic groups, and indigenous peoples.” But each of these groups must officially register with the National Electoral Court in order to run candidate lists in any election (national or municipal). Thus, I treat these groups simply as “political parties” no different than before the 2004 changes.

greater representation of smaller parties). Use of departments as electoral districts also means that total seat shares can be quite different than what national vote totals would suggest.

Use of departments as electoral districts has become increasingly significant as the *media luna* increases in population relative to Andean departments. Seat reapportionment has recently become a difficult political issue—even threatening to derail the 2005 election.<sup>125</sup> As the data presented in subsequent chapters demonstrate, since 1985 political power has gradually shifted away from Andean departments to the *media luna*. Each subsequent reapportionment (before the 1997 and 2005 elections) increased the net number of seats allocated to the *media luna* and reduced the net number of Andean seats. There is also a significantly disproportional voter-to-seat ratio between departments. This disproportionality principally affects larger departments, which are under-represented (a higher voter-to-seat ratio); conversely, smaller departments are over-represented. But the net result has been that *media luna* departments (taken as a whole) have been over-represented in the House of Deputies. Likewise, *media luna* departments have also steadily increased their total share of representation in the lower house. Table 4.2 shows differences in seat apportionment between departments across time.

Issues of seat apportionment are important because, until 2005, parliament elected the president. Because the parliamentary election is made by a joint session of the two chambers, the over-representation of lowland departments is increased. Since seats in the Senate are set at three seats per department, the four lowland departments of Santa Cruz,

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<sup>125</sup> Because seat apportionment has followed census data, it has not kept up with the rapid increase in Bolivia's urban population, which is concentrated in the three metropolitan areas of La Paz-El Alto, Santa Cruz, and Cochabamba. Although La Paz has often been the most under-represented department, many in Santa Cruz (historically a "frontier" department) have pushed this as a salient political issue.

Beni, Pando, and Tarija have consistently held 44.4% of the upper house. In a joint session of the legislative assembly, the total number of seats is 157, making 79 the number of votes necessary to elect a president. The four *media luna* departments have held 54 seats (34.4%) between 1985 and 1993, 57 seats (36.3%) between 1997 and 2002, and 60 seats (38.2%) in 2005. Of course, such figures mean Andean departments continue to hold a supermajority of seats in both legislative chambers.

Yet (as the next three chapters show) the disproportionality of seat apportionment across departments coincided with different voting patterns across the *media luna* and Andean Bolivia. Combined with differences in party alignments across regions, and electoral formulas that benefited some party alignments over others, the reality of the electoral system meant that parties that fared better in the *media luna* had substantial advantages when it came to form governments. In effect, until 2005, only candidates that won in the *media luna* went on to be president.

Between 1985 and 1997 different proportional formulas were used to allocate seats in the House of Deputies (see Table 4.3). Since 1967, seats were awarded using a D'Hondt formula. The D'Hondt method uses a highest averages (or quotient) formula that allocates seats, starting with the party with the highest quotient and working down. This method tends to over-compensate large parties and diminish the representation of smaller parties. The 1989 election used a double quotient formula meant to further depress the representation of smaller parties. The 1993 election used a Sainte-Laguë formula that, though similar to the D'Hondt method, uses only odd quotients and tends to increase the representation of smaller parties.

Table 4.2

## Seat apportionment by department, 1985-2005

Year	Department	Seats	Change	Voters registered	Voters per seat	% total voters	% total seats
1985	La Paz	28		718,229	25,651	34.2	21.5
	Cochabamba	18		355,596	19,755	16.9	13.8
	Oruro	10		126,256	12,626	6.0	7.7
	Potosí	19		254,637	13,402	12.1	14.6
	Chuquisaca	13		124,347	9,565	5.9	10.0
	Tarija	9		86,786	9,643	4.1	6.9
	Santa Cruz	17		357,722	21,042	17.0	13.1
	Beni	9		64,509	7,168	3.1	6.9
1989	Pando	7		10,340	1,477	0.5	5.4
	La Paz	28		752,487	26,875	37.4	21.5
	Cochabamba	18		351,891	19,550	17.5	13.8
	Oruro	10		137,259	13,726	6.8	7.7
	Potosí	19		219,458	11,550	10.9	14.6
	Chuquisaca	13		117,802	9,062	5.9	10.0
	Tarija	9		87,531	9,726	4.4	6.9
	Santa Cruz	17		353,284	20,781	17.6	13.1
1993	Beni	9		68,205	7,578	3.4	6.9
	Pando	7		10,890	1,556	0.5	5.4
	La Paz	28		883,482	31,553	37.0	21.5
	Cochabamba	18		367,661	20,426	15.4	13.8
	Oruro	10		139,123	13,912	5.9	7.7
	Potosí	19		190,677	10,036	8.0	14.6
	Chuquisaca	13		118,037	9,080	4.9	10.0
	Tarija	9		102,794	11,422	4.3	6.9
1997	Santa Cruz	17		480,071	28,240	20.1	13.1
	Beni	9		90,204	10,023	3.8	6.9
	Pando	7		13,059	1,866	0.5	5.4
	La Paz	31	+3	1,056,634	34,085	34.2	23.8
	Cochabamba	18		527,160	29,287	17.1	13.8
	Oruro	10		172,278	17,228	5.6	7.7
	Potosí	15	-4	252,047	16,803	8.2	11.5
	Chuquisaca	11	-2	196,703	17,882	6.4	8.5
2002	Tarija	9		157,487	17,499	5.1	6.9
	Santa Cruz	22	+5	733,627	33,347	23.7	16.9
	Beni	9		132,847	14,761	4.3	6.9
	Pando	5	-2	19,236	3,847	0.6	3.8
	La Paz	31		1,273,664	41,086	30.7	23.8
	Cochabamba	18		725,414	40,301	17.5	13.8
	Oruro	10		207,910	20,791	5.0	7.7
	Potosí	15		337,047	22,470	8.1	11.5
2005	Chuquisaca	11		250,673	22,789	6.0	8.5
	Tarija	9		204,298	22,700	4.9	6.9
	Santa Cruz	22		972,245	44,193	23.4	16.9
	Beni	9		159,429	17,714	3.8	6.9
	Pando	5		24,375	4,875	0.6	3.8
	La Paz	31		1,273,664	41,086	30.7	23.8
	Cochabamba	18		725,414	40,301	17.5	13.8
	Oruro	10		207,910	20,791	5.0	7.7



Table 4.2—Continued

## Seat apportionment by department, 1985-2005

Year	Department	Seats	Change	Voters registered	Voters per seat	% total voters	% total seats
2005	La Paz	29	-2	1,183,222	40,801	32.2	22.3
	Cochabamba	19	+1	648,643	34,139	17.7	14.6
	Oruro	9	-1	194,393	21,599	5.3	6.9
	Potosí	14	-1	281,590	20,114	7.7	10.8
	Chuquisaca	11		214,409	19,492	5.8	8.5
	Tarija	9		177,976	19,775	4.8	6.9
	Santa Cruz	25	+3	810,591	32,424	22.1	19.2
	Beni	9		134,721	14,969	3.7	6.9
	Pando	5		25,607	5,121	0.7	3.8

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. I chose to compare apportionment using registered voter data because it more accurately gives a sense of the differences in seat-to-population ratios over time (census data does not capture changes in population between elections). Nevertheless, voter registration may not accurately correlate with actual population figures (which would include, of course, residents not of voting age) in departments at the time of election.

Table 4.3

## Election counting rules and their general effects, 1985-2005

Year	Electoral System	Counting rule	Threshold	Parties elected	ENPV	ENPS
1985	List-PR	D'Hondt	None	10	4.6	4.3
1989	List-PR	Double quotient	None	5	5.0	3.9
1993	List-PR	Sainte-Laguë	None	8	4.7	3.7
1997	MMP	D'Hondt	3%	7	5.9	5.5
2002	MMP	D'Hondt	3%	8	5.8	5.0
2005	MMP	D'Hondt	3%	4	2.6	2.4

Parties elected are those that won at least one parliamentary seat not all parties that contested an election. The two different measures for the effective number of parties consider each party's share of votes (ENPV) and each party's share of seats (ENPS); both use the formula developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979).

Each of these reforms had the expected result. Though the effective number of parties consistently declined from 1985 to 1993, the absolute number of parties that won

representation to the lower house went from ten in 1985, to five in 1989, to eight in 1993. The change to a mixed-member electoral system in 1994 re-introduced a D'Hondt seat allocation formula, along with a 3% electoral threshold. This electoral formula was used consistently in 1997, 2002, and 2005.

### **The Party System**

This “parliamentarized” system also operates within a multiparty system. The use of proportional electoral formulas—including MMP—has concurred with a multiparty system, consistent with the expectations of “Duverger’s law.”<sup>126</sup> The total number of candidate lists participating in elections has fluctuated from a high of eighteen (in 1985) to a low of eight (in 2005). But merely looking at the number of lists is deceptive. Candidate lists are often formed by pre-electoral alliances involving two or more parties. An analysis of Bolivia’s party system is further complicated because many political parties are not institutionalized, often serving merely as factional or personal vehicles.

Defining a political party in the context of Bolivian elections can be conceptually difficult. The problem arises from distinguishing institutionalized parties from mere personalistic vehicles, populist vehicles, or factional wings within a party. Using a normative distinction between “parties” and “personalistic vehicles” is inadequate because nearly all of the parties have, since their founding, been dominated by a single leader (or *candillo*) and

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<sup>126</sup> Maurice Duverger (1957) posited that proportional electoral formulas tend to produce multiparty systems, while plurality (or first-past-the-post) electoral formulas tend to two-party systems. Other scholars have challenged “Duverger’s law” by pointing out that party systems have roots in, and are shaped by, social cleavages, and themselves install electoral systems to protect their interests (essentially inverting the causal relationship). See Rokkan and Lipset (1967)

there has been little, if any, leadership turnover.<sup>127</sup> Even the MNR (founded in 1941) was dominated by Paz Estenssoro until the 1980s, and by Sánchez de Lozada since.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, distinguishing between “parties” and “factions” is equally difficult because some factions (e.g. MIR-BL) go on to become clearly independent political parties in their own right. Because this dissertation focuses on electoral politics, I instead adopt a simpler conceptualization: For simplicity, this dissertation uses the term “electoral list” (or “candidate list”) rather than “party list” to describe a slate of candidates in any election. This distinction is useful because it recognizes pre-electoral alliances as a single list, without implying any information about the lists’ status as a party. Thus, for example, the joint ADN-MIR electoral alliance of 1993 is a single list, even though it was comprised of at least four separate parties (ADN, MIR, PDC, FRI). Similarly, I qualify Podemos (Jorge Quiroga’s 2005 electoral vehicle) as an “electoral list” rather than as a political party. In keeping with standard conventions, however, I use “party” (e.g. “effective number of parties”) rather than “list” in subsequent discussion.

The remainder of this section gives a general overview of Bolivia’s party system as it relates to the period under study (1985-2005). For detailed histories of the country’s parties and their evolution over time, see Isaác Sandoval Rodríguez (1999), Mario Rolón Anaya (1999), and Salvador Romero Ballivián (2003). Here, I am primarily concerned with describing how parties fit within the party system. It is important to note that classifying

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<sup>127</sup> While some parties (e.g. MNR, MIR, ADN) recently adopted internal democratic or participatory institutions in the 1990s, these have tended to be weak and ineffective in generating new leadership. This contributed to the decline in the public confidence and legitimacy of political parties.

<sup>128</sup> Sánchez de Lozada’s dominance of the party was highly contested after October 2003, as the party split into *gonista* and other factions. The party has been led by Mirtha Quevedo, a former senator from Oruro, since Sánchez de Lozada resigned as party *jefe* April 2006.

Bolivian parties along a traditional left-right ideological spectrum is difficult because few parties (including the largest ones) are ideologically or doctrinally committed. As noted earlier, the populist model of organization inherited as a legacy of the 1952 Revolution produced a series of parties that, in many ways, organizationally imitate the MNR. One common characteristic is for parties to seek broad cross-sectoral alliances with different movements or groups. Similarly, the ideological reference point for many parties is 1952, rather than an “international” left-right orientation. One notices that few Bolivian parties use the term “party” in their title—the tendency is to use terms such as “movement” or “front.”<sup>129</sup> Similarly, many of the parties that emerged in during the democratic transition were simply factions of the post-1952 MNR coalition.<sup>130</sup> Though somewhat reductionist, one can also describe the post-transition party system as a constellation of patron-client networks, with state patronage as the network’s currency. Nevertheless, there are noticeable differences between parties.

Bolivian scholars who analyze the party system tend to categorize parties along both ideological and structural dimensions. Roberto Laserna (1992) developed a typology that placed parties along two dimensions: ideological commitment (split into programmatic, populist, and dogmatic categories) and level of institutionalization (distinguishing between low and high). Moira Zuazo (1999) focused on two dimensions: a left-to-right policy

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<sup>129</sup> The few exceptions to this rule are notable because they are consciously “international” in orientation. These include the Christian democratic PDC, the Soviet-line Communist Party, and the Trotskyite POR (which is closely tied to the Fourth International). Despite their influence among intellectual circles, none of these parties has had independent electoral success.

<sup>130</sup> These include Siles Zuazo’s MNRI (which made up the core of the UDP alliance), Walter Guevara Arce’s PRA, Roberto Jordán Pando’s AFIN-MNR, Carlos Serrate Reich’s MNRV, Lydia Guiller Tejada’s PRIN, and Guillermo Bedregal’s MNR-U. Several of these either rejoined the MNR by the late 1980s, though many remained independent.

orientation and type of internal structure (distinguishing between seigniorial and popular. Ricardo Pereyra (2000) categorized parties based on the leadership structure (strong to weak) and the type of change advocated (moderate to radical).

Instead, I use a simpler classification adopted from R. A. Mayorga (1991; 1995) scheme that fits with the conventional usage and distinguishes Bolivia's political parties into three basic categories:

1. Systemic
2. Neopopulist
3. Anti-systemic

Additionally, I borrow some of the conceptual categories developed by Michael Coppedge (1997) to describe parties in later chapters.<sup>131</sup>

Two other types of parties, which do not easily fit into this categorization, are worth noting. The first, are the *kataristas* (indigenous-centric “Aymaran nationalist” parties). These include parties that have accommodated themselves within the systemic liberal-pluralist discourse (e.g. MRTKL) and those that have advocated more radical anti-system change (e.g. MIP).<sup>132</sup> Indigenous parties, however, have not historically fared well in Bolivian elections (in contrast to indigenous parties in Ecuador); Bolivian political life has remained principally an urban, *mestizo* affair.

The second group of parties includes orthodox Marxist or other ideologically “socialist” parties. Like indigenous parties, these have had limited success, exercising little influence beyond certain intellectual circles and university campuses. The Bolivian left was

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<sup>131</sup> While I borrow concepts such as “Center-Left” and “Christian Right” from Coppedge, I do not always agree with some of his assessments of specific parties as he applies them to Bolivia.

<sup>132</sup> The development of *katarismo* is briefly outlined in Chapter 6.

influential in the transition to democracy, forming the bulk of the 1982-1985 UDP government. In 1985, the electorate shifted decidedly away from the left. Only MIR survived, in large part by distancing itself from its earlier ideological leftist position and moving closer towards the political center, becoming one of the three systemic parties.

### **Systemic Parties**

The “systemic” parties are the three largest parties that emerged from the 1985 election as identified by R. A. Mayorga (1991; 1995):

1. Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR)
2. Acción Democrática Nacionalista (ADN)
3. Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR)

Despite their different historical trajectories, these three parties converged on a similar liberal-pluralist discourse by the late 1980s. The three formed a “tripod” upon which political democracy rested, with at least one (but not more than two) of these parties government from 1985 through 2002; in five consecutive elections, a member of a systemic party was elected president. During much of this period, the center-right ADN and center-left MIR formed an opposition bloc against the centrist MNR. Such an alliance was possible, in part, because the MNR pushed the liberal-pluralist discourse further than the more nationalist ADN and MIR.

Defining “systemic” parties more broadly includes several minor parties that have consistently supported the three parties in government. These are: the Frente Revolucionario de Izquierda (FRI), a long-time ally of MIR; the Partido Democrático Cristiano (PDC), a long-time ally of ADN; the Movimiento Bolivia Libre (MBL), a former faction of MIR that

eventually became a steadfast ally of MNR; and the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari de Liberación (MRTKL), a *katarista* party that has supported the MNR since 1993.

### **Neopopulist Parties**

During the 1990s, popular discontent with neoliberal reforms and disaffection with the systemic parties (particularly among the urban poor) was principally expressed through three populist parties:

1. Conciencia de Patria (Condepa)
2. Unidad Cívica Solidaridad (UCS)
3. Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR)

R. A. Mayorga (1995) describes these parties as “neopopulist”—in much the same way as other scholars use the term (Roberts 1995, Knight 1998, Weyland 2000, Conniff 2001). Like traditional Latin American populist movements, these were highly personalist in nature, relying heavily on the charisma and popularity of their leader. These are neopopulist movements, however, because while they mobilize followers with anti-neoliberal rhetoric, they nevertheless show themselves willing to adopt neoliberal policies. Thus, we could include Unidad Nacional (UN) and Poder Democrático Social (Podemos) in this category as populist parties.

Unlike in other countries in the region, no populist candidate has yet been elected. Thus, it is unclear if they would have governed like neopopulist leaders in Peru (Fujimori) or Argentina (Menem). Still, each of these parties participated in at least one coalition government. The emergence of populist parties did not immediately alter the political system, their electoral success eroded support for systemic parties and showed underlying opposition to neoliberal policies.

### Anti-Systemic Parties

Two major “anti-systemic” parties emerged by the 2002 election and substantially altered the political status quo:

1. Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)
2. Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti (MIP)

Both of these parties emerged from small, unsuccessful electoral fronts that had long challenged the neoliberal system. MAS had been one of the minor members of various leftist alliances (FPU, IU) led by the Communist Party.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, MIP emerged from within the radicalized *katarista* movement associated with the Marxist Eje-Pachakuti. In many ways, MAS and MIP represent traditional Latin American populist (as opposed to neopopulist) movements. In other ways, however, the two borrow from an older Bolivian political tradition: syndicalism. While loosely “un-ideological,” the two parties borrow heavily from the populist “style” of politics (mass rallies, marches, leaders who demonstrate their closeness to “the people,” etc.). But unlike traditional populist or neopopulist movements, these parties are substantially more institutionalized. MIP is sustained both by the Confederation of Peasant Syndicates (CSUTCB) and the organization of *ayllus* (indigenous communal units) around Lake Titicaca. MAS grew out of the *cocalero* syndicates of the Chapare region, from which it began establishing a network of alliances with other peasant, trade, labor syndicates throughout the country.

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<sup>133</sup> The evolution of MAS is quite complicated and further detailed in Chapter 6, where MAS’ historical relationship with Bolivian *falangismo* is noted.



## **Coalition-Building Norms**

Coalition-building norms are informal, commonly accepted codes of behavior that specify how different political parties cooperate to construct a coalition government. In the Bolivian case, these had evolved by the 1989 election into a commonly accepted set of expectations based on the need to seek support in parliament to elect a presidential candidate. Unlike more “formal” institutions such as electoral systems (which are codified in laws and statutes), coalition-building norms are nevertheless political institutions—that is, political actors follow certain (predictable and observable) patterns of behavior in their mutual interactions.

The Bolivian style of coalition-building was facilitated by the other features of parliamentarized presidentialism, but was born out of immediate political necessity and machination. In 1985, in the midst of an economic crisis, political elites hoped to avoid the kind of impasse that prevented the election of an executive in 1979 and 1980. Paz Estenssoro was elected by a parliamentary coalition of leftist parties in order to prevent Banzer (a former dictator and the electoral front-runner) from legitimately assuming the executive office. Needing strong parliamentary support for his government’s economic recovery program—and hoping to avoid the experience of the weak UDP government—Paz Estenssoro sought a coalition alliance with Banzer’s ADN weeks after assuming office. The success of the MNR-ADN government (1985-1989)—when measured by its ability to give the president strong parliamentary support—was apparent. Every subsequent government (until the current MAS government) relied on a formal coalition agreement between two or more parties (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

## Coalition and opposition parties, 1985-2005

Year	Government coalition	Opposition <sup>134</sup>
1985	MNR-FRI ADN	MIR MNRI MNRV PDC FPU PS-1 MRTKL FSB
1989	MIR-FRI ADN-PDC	MNR Condepa IU
1993	MNR-MRTKL MBL UCS	ADN MIR ASD ARBOL Eje-Pachakuti
1997	ADN-NFR-PDC MIR-FRI UCS Condepa <sup>135</sup>	MNR MBL IU
2002	MNR-MBL MIR-FRI ADN UCS	MAS MIP NFR PS
2005	MAS	Podemos MNR UN

Until 2002, these coalition governments involved an intricate balancing act between three systemic parties (MNR, ADN, MIR) in what can be described as a “tripod” system. During the 1990s, coalitions were also sustained in large measure by the accommodation of

<sup>134</sup> Opposition parties here include only those parties that won at least one legislative seat.

<sup>135</sup> Condepa was dismissed from the government coalition 6 August 1998, and moved into the opposition.

the new populist parties. Thus, though coalitions centered around two political “blocs” (MNR and ADN-MIR), there was significant agreement between the major political actors on the economic and political paradigm—namely, a neoliberal economic model combined with liberal-pluralist representative democracy. This dissertation does not explore whether coalition-building strategies were facilitated because of a shared “ideological space” between the major players (that is, they develop strategies based on cooperation) or whether the ensuing stability resulted from a form of “Nash equilibrium” (a non-cooperative balance established because no player benefits from adopting a new strategy). What is relevant here is simply that political elites did not deviate from coalition bargaining behavior between 1989 through 2002 based on rather predictable (in hindsight) patterns of behavior.

After 2002, the coalition norms broke down as new actors—particularly MAS and MIP—adopted radically different political strategies. Unlike the neopopulist parties, which accommodated themselves into the political system and participated in coalition-bargaining, these new parties adopted “go it alone” strategies that preceded the eventual dismantling of the existing political system. In large measure this dissertation explores how formal institutions that facilitated political stability between 1985 and 2002 were no longer able to maintain such stability by 2002. It is unclear whether coalition politics has a future in Bolivia. Evo Morales won the 2005 election with a simple majority; MAS was not required to bargain with other parties for parliamentary election. Thus, Morales and MAS lack incentives to discard zero-sum political strategies for cooperative ones.

### **Referendum Democracy**

The 2004 constitutional reforms introduced referendum or plebiscite democracy in Bolivia. Prior to the reforms, formal political life was explicitly restricted to political parties

and the institutions of representative democracy. The reforms—which included the right of unelected individual citizens or civic associations to introduce legislative proposals—were meant to expand the participatory nature of Bolivian democracy. As of this writing, Bolivians have voted in only two referendums: the July 2004 hydrocarbons referendum and the July 2005 referendum on regional (that is, departmental) political autonomy.

Despite the theoretically more “participatory” nature of referendum elections, they are prone to several notable drawbacks (Centellas 2004). First, question wording and ordering can significantly affect outcomes. The gas referendum involved a series of five questions of various lengths and technical detail. Second, because question wording is itself a contingent factor in how voters react to referenda, the process by which the question wording is established is itself a decisive political process. Yet this process is still reserved for political elites, who naturally work to produce wording that will most likely guarantee their desired outcome. Finally, because referendum votes are enacted by government officials and elected representatives, the referendum results—even if binding—may be in differently interpreted by the political elites responsible for executing government policy. Evo Morales interpreted the autonomy referendum as non-binding because it the “yes” vote did not win across the entire country, even though it won by large supermajorities in the *media luna* departments.

It is unclear what long-term effect referendum democracy will have on Bolivia. Nevertheless, the adoption of provisions for referendum democracy in the 2004 constitutional reforms will certainly change the country’s political dynamics. Whether referendums will help increase active, informed civic participation in political life (as in Uruguay) or whether these will simply become a tool for populist plebiscites (as in Venezuela) remains to be seen.

### From Unitary Republic to De Facto Federalism

Finally, though this dissertation focuses on competitive electoral politics at the central state level, a few words about municipal and departmental politics are necessary. Constitutionally, Bolivia is a unitary republic and not a federal (or confederal) state. But like many Latin American countries, Bolivia underwent a process of political decentralization during the 1990s. Yet the country's "municipalization"—the transfer of political authority and economic resources to local, municipal governments—carried out under the Ley de Participación Popular reforms could be described as a de facto "federalization" of the Bolivian state.

While the central state's constitutional authority still supercedes the authority of municipal governments,<sup>136</sup> the municipal governments are now enshrined in the national constitution and given substantial political and economic autonomy (they can determine, collect, and administer their own local taxes). Over time, municipal governments have also evolved differently, reflecting local social mores, economic necessities, or political practices. Some of the larger municipal governments have even instituted their own *guardia municipal*, a local police force independent of the Policía Nacional. Other (mostly rural) municipalities have adopted indigenous legal institutions. The result is that the country's 321 municipal governments significant political and economic autonomy from the central state in ways that go beyond mere administrative decentralization.

Similarly, the decision in 2005 to allow direct, popular election of prefects (the administrative executives in charge of each of the nine departments) altered the relationship

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<sup>136</sup> Even in federal systems, of course, the central state's authority supersedes the authority of the federal units.

between the central state and its nine administrative units. While prefects are still constitutionally responsible to the central state—not their constituents—the logic of electoral politics dictates that prefects seek to satisfy their voters, rather than the central state. Further, the reality that most of the country’s current prefects belong to the political opposition means that the previous superior-subordinate relationship between presidents and prefects is effectively broken. And because the direct election of prefects was a concession to demands for greater regional political autonomy, the change may signal the start of a second decentralization process that will further “federalize” the country.

### **Conclusion**

Both reform periods—the 1994 Participación Popular municipalization and the 2004-2005 adoption of referendum and prefectural elections—radically altered Bolivia’s constitutional framework and signaled shifts into three distinct institutional periods. These translated into significant behavioral differences across electoral campaigns. The following three chapters analyze each of the three periods in turn. The first period (1982-1993) set the tone by establishing the basic framework for parliamentarized presidentialism. While the later periods saw a this framework transformed (1993-2002) and then fall into crisis (post-2003), this first period saw the emergence of a powerful elite consensus. It was in this period that Bolivia’s “democracy on stilts” was constructed.

## CHAPTER 5

### **CONSTRUCTING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: 1985-1993**

The first three general elections after the return to democracy in 1982 were similar in several ways. First, they saw the emergence of a multiparty system that revolved around three parties: MNR, ADN, and MIR. These three parties moved towards the political center and came to endorse a neoliberal economic model that restructured the Bolivian state away from the 1952 “state capitalism” model. Second, while opposition to the country’s neoliberal reforms emerged by the 1990s in the form of two populist parties—Condepa and UCS—these were principally neopopulist, personalist vehicles and did not offer coherent alternative programs. Both Condepa and (especially) UCS soon accommodated themselves to the basic neoliberal framework and the elite consensus that underpinned it. The period from 1985 until 1997 saw a weak, ineffective political left unable to challenge the “systemic” parties at the ballot. In short, this was a period of institutionalization of neoliberal economic and political policies that rested on broad consensus between the three largest political parties.

The most important feature of this period was the construction of a stable elite consensus that involved almost the entire political class. While Bolivia’s political elite was, since 1952, suspended above the popular masses, it was extremely divided. Factional rivalries between—and within—the major political parties were a powerfully destabilizing force well into the early 1980s. Political competition during the 1970s and early 1980s was “politics as war”—an extreme version of zero-sum politics. After 1985 a remarkable transformation occurred: the political elites began to moderate their competition, forging a broad consensus on macropolitical and (perhaps more importantly) macroeconomic policies. In short, the stilt

walkers were learning to work together. In the context of Bolivia's history—particularly the lack of experience of stable inter-party electoral competition<sup>137</sup>—this transformation was remarkable.

The first three elections (1985, 1989, and 1993) used similar electoral systems. Unlike later elections, these used a simple list-PR ballot that gave voters a single choice. Though the specific counting formula varied from one election to the next (see Table 3.3), these were more similar to each other than to later elections (1997, 2002, and 2005), which used a mixed-member electoral system combined with a 3% national electoral threshold. Likewise, seat apportionment (and, subsequently, district magnitude) remained the same during this period. Additionally, electoral behavior during this period was similar. Voter turnout remained above 70 percent, though it marked a substantial decline from 1985 figures. For the first two elections, the vote was also heavily concentrated between the three systemic parties, though there was a marked decrease in 1993. The effective number of electoral parties (ENPV) also remained steady (see Table 4.3); the figures would increase sharply in 1997 and 2002.

The 1985 election inaugurated the “parliamentarized presidentialism” system. As in 1979 and 1980, no presidential candidate won an absolute majority of the popular vote in 1985. Unlike the previous elections, however, the newly elected parliament soon selected a president from among the three front-runners. Additionally, the 1985 MNR-ADN “Pact for Democracy” provided the Paz Estenssoro government with a legislative majority, something

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<sup>137</sup> The last period of stable inter-party electoral competition in Bolivian history was during the liberal republic of the early twentieth century (1899-1934). The liberal republic was, of course, rested on a highly restricted suffrage. Since the introduction of universal suffrage after the 1952 National Revolution, stable inter-party competition did not exist.



the previous UDP minority government had lacked. Each of the subsequent elections would result in this combination of a legislative election of the president and formal agreements (or “pacts”) between parties that provide executives with multiparty majority coalitions. Along with the institutionalization of neoliberalism, this period saw the institutionalization and consolidation of parliamentarized presidentialism.

Finally, this period saw all three systemic parties win large vote shares across all nine departments, typically placing them in the top three in every department. The widespread defection of voters in the rural Altiplano and Cochabamba valleys would wait until the 1990s. Instead, from 1985-1993, the systemic parties could expect to do well in each of the nine departments. Additionally, the kind of regional polarization of party politics that would emerge in the late 1990s had yet to begin. Consequently, each election also led to the formation of a government that included at least one of the three systemic parties. Still, a permanently excluded (but still relatively small) minority—particularly voters in the city of El Alto—who regularly voted for non-systemic opposition parties was noticeable during this period. As this disaffected constituency expanded in the 1990s, the still solidly systemic *media luna* constituencies increasingly determined the outcome of presidential elections.

### **The UDP Government and Its Impact**

This post-1985 elite consensus emerged from the historical experience of Hernán Siles Zuazo’s 1982-1985 government. The regime was a product of Bolivia’s tumultuous democratic transition, which began in 1978 after widespread social pressure for a democratic opening pushed Hugo Banzer end to his regime and announce general elections. As in other Latin American democratic transitions, 1978 saw the return of the same Bolivian political leaders (and their movements) of the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, the 1970s had seen an

even further fractionalization of the political class, as younger members defected to form their own factions adding Christian democratic, neo-Marxist, *indigenista*, and other ideological elements to the earlier nationalist, populist, corporatist, and anarcho-syndicalist strains. These factions were driven as much by ideological as by personal differences, some of them old political vendettas carried over from the divide-and-conquer policies of the 1952-1964 MNR governments.<sup>138</sup> The chaotic—and often unpredictable—infigting within the political class made Bolivia's transition to democracy one of the region's most difficult.

In 1978, Banzer named General Juan Pereda Asbún as the regime's official presidential candidate. Once it was clear that Pereda Asbún would not win, the election was annulled and Pereda Asbún launched a military coup in July. The ever-present split within the military between *institucionalistas* (who opposed continued military involvement in politics) and hard-liners now became much sharper. The deeply divided—and politicized—military was exploited by members of the political class, as various competing factions cultivated their military connections. Conspiratorial activity was at a fever pitch between 1978 and the early 1980s. Only months later, in November, a military junta overthrew Pereda Asbún and again called for new elections.

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<sup>138</sup> MNR factions included: MNR-H (the "Historic" MNR) led by Paz Estenssoro; MNRI led by Siles Zuazo; PRA led by Walter Guevara Arze; MNR-U led by Guillermo Bedregal, AFIN-MNR led by Roberto Jordán Pando, and PRIN led by Juan Lechín and Lidia Gueiller Tejada. To the list we can include MIR led by Jaime Paz Zamora, which was born from the MNR's university student wing in the early 1970s. One could also include ADN led by Banzer, who at times described himself and his movement as a continuation of the National Revolution; his dictatorship was partly installed, and support from 1971-1974, by elements of the MNR (including Paz Estenssoro).

Between 1979 and 1982, Bolivia experienced two more elections, two interim civilian presidents, and five military regimes.<sup>139</sup> Both the 1979 and 1980 general elections failed to produce a clear presidential winner. Unable to come to a consensus candidate for legislative election, parliament instead produced interim governments that were supposed to hold power until new elections could be held. Neither lasted long enough, as military juntas (backed by one or more parliamentary faction) overthrew each of these. Finally, in October 1982, the parliament elected in 1980 was reconvened; it named Siles Zuazo president. After three failed elections, the Bolivian political elite decided to forgo new elections entire and directly appoint a consensus candidate as constitutional president of the republic.

Siles Zuazo won 38.74% of the valid popular vote in 1980. He had campaigned at the head of a large coalition—the Unión Democrática y Popular (UDP)—that included his own MNRI (MNR de Izquierda), the young MIR, the (pro-Beijing) Bolivian Communist Party (PCB), and a number of smaller leftist-socialist parties. The government, however, was besieged from the start. In parliament, an obstructionist MNR and ADN legislative majority blocked the government. Additionally, the UDP government did not have the support of the syndicalist labor movement (the COB, Central Obrera Boliviana), which was still led by Juan Lechín and still unwilling to commit itself to any regime after the experience of the 1960s.

All the while, a growing economic crisis—one of the worst in Latin America’s “lost decade”—continued to spiral out of control. Facing a hostile labor movement that had declared war on any attempts at economic stabilization measures and the fear of a potential

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<sup>139</sup> Elections were held in 1979 and 1980. Both elections led to a political stalemate, after no candidate won a simple majority and parliament was unable to decide on a winner. Parliament chose Wálter Guevara Arze (PRA) and Lidia Gueiler Tejada (PRIN) as interim presidents in 1979 and 1980, respectively. The longest of the military regimes, led by Luis García Mesa, lasted from July 1980 to August 1981.

coup from the right, Siles Zuazo opted instead to end his term early and called for new elections. In the midst of growing labor unrest and nation-wide strikes and a near-total collapse of the economy Bolivians went to the polls again 1985, their fourth time in seven years.

### **The 1985 Election**

The 1985 general election was the first election conducted under a democratically elected government. As such, it marked the end of the transition to democracy and the beginning of the process of democratic consolidation. The election of Víctor Paz Estenssoro to the presidency marked the country's first peaceful transfer of power to an opposition party through a democratic election since the era of the liberal republic. The electoral campaign, however, was marked by much uncertainty. Bolivia's recent democratic transition had been very difficult and a military coup backed by one or more of the candidates was not improbable. The social chaos and economic crisis—and the highly antagonistic campaign rhetoric—did nothing to alleviate such fears.

In the end, Bolivia's fragile democracy emerged with a powerful majoritarian coalition government. That government would go on to launch a sweeping neoliberal structural reform program that dramatically changed the Bolivian state and its relations to civil and economic society. The 1985 general election marked the end of an era and set the tone for the next two decades. Subsequent elections would be conducted under the norms of parliamentarized presidentialism, with the expectation that a president would be elected by parliament, and that he would govern with the support of a multiparty majoritarian coalition. After 1985, members of the political class was still elevated on their stilts, but they were more careful about how hard they jostled each other. More immediately, the fallout of

the 1985 election saw the size of the “political space” available to the political class shrink dramatically, as many small parties and factions were either relegated to unimportance or absorbed into larger parties.

### **Parties and Candidates**

Eighteen parties contested the 1985 general election, five more than in 1980. Of these, one (PDC, Partido Democrático Cristiano) was a Christian democratic center-left party, one (MNRV, MNR de Vanguardia) belonged to the nationalist center-left, two were *katarista* indigenous parties, and eleven belonged to the Bolivian left.<sup>140</sup> Because internal divisions shattered the former UDP coalition, the left entered the 1985 election divided and weakened in the face of the growing economic crisis. Even Siles Zuazo’s MNRI had split into two factions. Paz Zamora (Siles Zuazo’s vice president) had publicly distanced himself from the UDP government and began moving MIR into the center-left. Most of the remaining UDP alliance members organized into either the FPU (Frente del Pueblo Unido) or IU (Izquierda Unida). In contrast the MNR (center-right) and ADN (right) both entered the 1985 election in a far stronger position than they had been in 1980. Additionally, the old FSB and ARENA (Alianza Renovadora Nacional) represented Bolivia’s far right.

The MNR entered the 1985 general election (mostly) reunited behind its historic leader, Víctor Paz Estenssoro. Paz Estenssoro had suffered the consequences of his party’s involvement in the November 1979 Alberto Natusch Busch coup that had overthrown the

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<sup>140</sup> The Bolivian left has historically been riven by ideological and personal divisions, and has included parties that cover a broad spectrum. Of the eleven party lists classified as “socialist left” that participated in the 1985 election, FPU, PS-1, and IU represented various Marxist-socialist positions, while POR articulated the traditional Bolivian Trotskyite position. The remainder represented various other progressive, humanist, social, or nationalist-left positions.

interim government of Walter Guevara Arze, leader of a rival MNR faction, PRA (Partido Revolucionario Autentico). By the 1980 election, the MNR Paz Estenssoro candidacy had also lost the support of MNR-U (MNR Único, led by Guillermo Bedregal)<sup>141</sup> as well as the Christian democrat FDR (Frente Democrático Republicano, led by former president Luís Adolfo Salinas, a former PDC member). The recently reunified 1985 MNR hoped to improve its standing relative to the 1980 election, when Paz Estenssoro had only won 20.14% of the valid vote (a far cry from 35.88% in 1979, when he had come in just behind Siles Zuazo).<sup>142</sup> With the UDP in disarray, the MNR entered the 1985 election confident of victory.

Hugo Banzer was again the ADN presidential candidate.<sup>143</sup> The former dictator's party had emerged in 1979 with little expectation of success yet had managed a respectable third place finish with 14.88%, which improved to 16.83% in the 1980 general election. The party was heavily identified with the Banzer dictatorship (1971-1978) and represented the Bolivian right against the left and center-left blocs that formed around the Siles Zuazo and Paz Estenssoro between 1979 and 1980.<sup>144</sup> In its formation, the party also rooted itself in the

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<sup>141</sup> Bedregal was actually one of the key figures in the 1979 Natusch coup (he served as the brief regime's Chancellor) and his MNR-U included the MNR wing that had actively supported the coup.

<sup>142</sup> The absolute difference in total numbers of votes for the MNR between 1979 and 1980 was 263,478, roughly half of the total 527,184 votes for Paz Estenssoro in 1979. The difference in votes between the UDP and MNR in the 1979 general election was only 1,512 votes.

<sup>143</sup> Banzer formed ADN shortly after the aborted 1978 election (which he did not actively support). He was the party's presidential candidate in 1979 and 1980.

<sup>144</sup> The 1979 MNR alliance included the Christian democratic left and the pro-Beijing communists. Until 1980, the MNR still occupied a relatively flexible center-left position. Only after 1985 could the MNR be described as a centrist or center-right political party. It should be noted, however, that many within the MNR still think of it as a "center-left" or even "progressive" political party. Sánchez de Lozada still thinks of himself in these terms, years after October 2003.

nationalist discourse of the 1952 National Revolution and described itself as a continuation of the national revolutionary project.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, the party's core support came from sectors of the urban middle class, particularly in the *media luna*. But in 1985, Banzer and ADN were poised to capitalize on the economic crisis and its discrediting effect on leftist alternatives, especially those that participated in the UDP government.

MIR made its independent political debut in 1985. The party had been founded in 1971 as a merger between the left-wing faction of the Christian democrats and radical members of the MNR's university student wing. Its leader and presidential candidate, Jaime Paz Zamora<sup>146</sup> had served as the UDP vice president, though by 9 January 1983 MIR formally abandoned the governing coalition over disputes concerning the government's "timid" economy policy.<sup>147</sup> The move led to a division within MIR itself. The party's left wing, MIR-BL (led by Antonio Aranibar), joined an alliance with other socialist and Marxist parties to campaign as FPU.<sup>148</sup> This left the Paz Zamora wing (MIR-NM) occupying a center-left, social-democrat position that hoped to distance itself from more radical or socialist left alternatives as the voice of the "moderate" left, while also standing in opposition to Paz Estenssoro and Banzer.<sup>149</sup>

Although the field was crowded with other candidates, few of these had substantive electoral hopes, though several would go on to play important roles in later elections.

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<sup>145</sup> Another important element of the ADN was its formation as a center-right "humanist" Christian democratic movement. For a detailed historical analysis of ADN, see Martha Peñaranda Bojanic 2004.

<sup>146</sup> Paz Zamora is also nephew to Paz Estenssoro.

<sup>147</sup> Paz Zamora nevertheless remained as vice president until the end of the UDP government.

<sup>148</sup> MIR-BL went on to become MBL. Other members of the FPU alliance included: MAS-U, PRIN, PCB, and another MIR splinter, MIR-Masas.

<sup>149</sup> MIR remains the only Bolivian political party formally aligned with the social democratic Socialist International.

Notable parties and candidates included Luis Ossio Sanjinés (PDC), Genaro Flores (MRTKL, Movimiento Revolucionario Tupaj Katari de Liberación), and Carlos Serrate Reich (MNRV). Ossio Sanjinés would eventually steer the Christian democrats into an alliance with ADN, becoming the ADN-PDC vice presidential candidate in 1989. Serrate Reich would enter an alliance with MIR during the 1989 elections. Flores was a key figure in the *katarista* movement and one of the founders of the CSUTCB (Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia), which broke away from the government-run CNTCB (Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia) in 1977. Finally, Guillermo Lora's Trotskyite POR never recovered the electoral strength it had in the 1940s-1950s, though it went on to play an influential role in the public universities and in the ideological orientation of several of the more radical leftist parties that followed—particularly the syndicalists in IU that would later day become MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo), led by Evo Morales.<sup>150</sup>

### **The Electoral Campaign**

Preparations for the 1985 general elections were conducted in an atmosphere of extreme uncertainty in the face of continued social unrest, especially a COB-led general strike on-going since March. Many parties—both on the right and the left—frequently claimed that the election was merely a political maneuver by the Siles Zuazo government. Others, particularly those allied to the COB-Lechín labor movement, denounced the election as a means to return the political right to power. The last few days of the campaign were also

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<sup>150</sup> A more detailed history of MAS is included in Chapter 7.



marked by fears of a possible military coup. Tensions were high and many wondered whether Bolivia's new democracy could survive, or whether it would tumble down.

While available archival newspaper reports of the 1985 electoral campaign are markedly fewer than those for latter elections, an overview of the campaign is possible. The 1985 campaign was visible primarily in street manifestations and public rallies, both in the cities and throughout the countryside. Early on, it was clear that the three front-runners would be Banzer, Paz Estenssoro, and Paz Zamora. The three campaigns all focused on the personal qualities and histories of their presidential candidates. The ADN campaign slogan was "*Banzer vuelve*" ("Banzer returns") and looked to the former dictator's 1972-1978 bureaucratic-authoritarian regime as a period of comparative social stability and economic prosperity. The MNR campaign emphasized the political experience and historical trajectory of Paz Estenssoro, appealing to the mythos of the 1952 National Revolution. The MIR campaign tried distancing itself from the "irresponsible" Siles Zuazo government and promised a reformulation of the principles of revolutionary nationalism, stressing itself as a "nationalist" left party in contrast to "internationalist" left parties.

No campaign outlined a specific economic recovery plan, though ADN most clearly alluded to a significant reduction in the state's economic role. Both MIR and the MNR frequently referenced Banzer's former dictatorship and described the party and its leader as "fascist" and "anti-popular."<sup>151</sup> Of the three parties, only ADN made any (though

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<sup>151</sup> In Spanish, *popular* means more precisely "of the people," which is often associated with political populism, as understood in the sociological literature on populism. To accuse any politician of not being *popular* implies that he/she is elitist and not representative of "the people" in the broader sense; it demonstrates a "populist imaginary" political discourse.

infrequent) references to a possible coalition government, though the party's spokesmen made it clear that the party would not compromise its core ideological positions.

In contrast, much of the socialist left's campaign attacks were focused in three directions. First, they invariably attacked ADN and MNR (sometimes also MIR) as forces of the right, with frequent references to Banzer's former dictatorship and the MNR's role in the 1971 and 1980 coups. Second, they attacked the current Siles Zuazo for betraying the left and for using the election as an excuse to hand power over to the political right. The old political slurs of the 1940s-1950s resurfaced, with Siles Zuazo called a *prisita* and *entreguista*. Finally, the parties also attacked each other in attempts to position themselves as the "true" Bolivian left. Overall, the left's discourse reflected extreme personalist and ideological factionalism. Ironically, with the exception of MIR (which confidently declared that it expected Paz Zamora to win the presidential election), the left made clear that it expected a victory for the right. Several parties and candidates even joined the COB and CSUTCB (whose president, Genaro Flores, was himself a presidential candidate) in calling for a popular boycott of the elections.

The central issue in 1985 was the economic crisis—particularly the problem of hyperinflation, which had reached over 20,000 percent by June. Perhaps the only specific difference between proposed solutions (again, no party provided specifics) came down to questions of how to handle the country's foreign debt.<sup>152</sup> The MNR, ADN, and MIR all called for a reduction in fiscal spending and proposed renegotiating the country's foreign debt—a move Siles Zuazo rejected. In contrast, most leftist candidates suggested that all

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<sup>152</sup> Between 1970 and 1985, Bolivia's foreign debt had increased from \$481.7 million to \$3,259.3 million, most of that in the period between 1980 and 1985. Bolivia's 1985 foreign debt accounted for 124.8% of GDP. For an overview of Bolivia's economic crisis, see Sachs and Morales 1988.

foreign debts incurred by previous de facto regimes should be dismissed, while IU and POR went further and proposed a complete disavowal of the country's entire foreign debt.

In the end, the campaign saw an ideologically principled but highly divided left resigned to a victory for the forces of the "right" (which included, in their estimation, the social democratic MIR). With discontent towards the Siles Zuazo's government widespread, the opposition MNR and ADN seemed the most confident. But neither offered clear proposals, but rather appealed to their earlier successes (the National Revolution and the economic boom of the early Banzer years, respectively). The chaotic 1970s and 1980s had also made Paz Estenssoro and Banzer bitter rivals, who spent most of the campaign ruthlessly attacking each other.<sup>153</sup>

## **Election Results**

The results of the 14 July 1985 general election confirmed a shift to the right, with an overwhelming electoral collapse of the former UDP parties and the Bolivian left (see Figure 5.1). Banzer leapt from third place in 1980 to first place in 1985, winning 32.83% of the valid vote, more than doubling his 1980 share. Paz Estenssoro, who won 30.37% of the valid vote, closely followed him. The reunified MNR had recovered its pre-1980 position, winning roughly the same share of votes it had won in 1979. In contrast, the former UDP alliance members jointly took only 18.98% of the vote, with more than half of those votes for MIR's

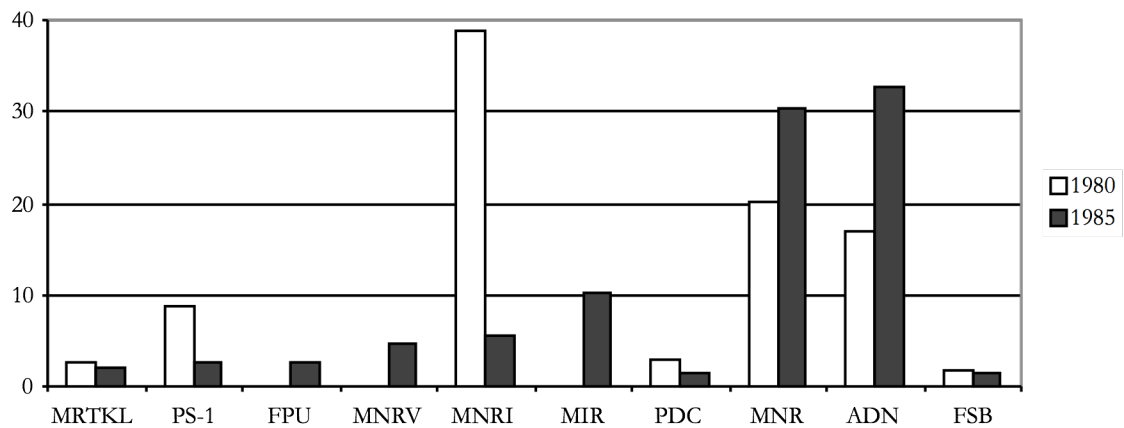
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<sup>153</sup> The attacks were not merely rhetorical in nature. There were several street clashes between MNR and ADN partisans, particularly in the city of La Paz.

Paz Zamora.<sup>154</sup> The 1985 results were a reverse image of 1979. The 1985 election was also marked by voter turnout substantially higher than 1980 (up five points). Though lower than the record turnout 90.09% voter turnout in 1979 (the first “fair” election), voter turnout in the 1985 general election would remain the high water mark for voter turnout during the next two decades.

Figure 5.1

Change in support for parties between 1980 and 1985, as percent of valid vote



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. MNRI 1980 reflects UDP; PDC 1980 reflects FDR; MRTKL 1980 reflects both MITKA factions.

Though vote shares for the MNR and ADN far surpassed their competitors, the election did not produce a two-party system. Instead, the effective number of electoral parties (ENPV) was 4.6. This was driven by the fact that while the MNR and ADN won nearly two thirds of the popular vote, the remaining third of the vote was split between

<sup>154</sup> Former UDP members included: MIR (153,143 votes), MNRI (82,418 votes), FPU (38,124 votes), and MNRI-1 (11,696 votes). Together, these parties received less than half the share of valid votes UDP had received in 1980.

sixteen other parties. The effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPS) was only slightly lower (4.3). This confirmed the previous tendency towards a multiparty system, which remained relatively stable from 1980 through 1993. Lastly, though the share of blank and null votes was relatively high (7.34% and 5.63%, respectively), these were comparable to their share in subsequent elections. Nevertheless, blank ballots surpassed the vote share for all but the three largest parties—and blank and null votes combined surpassed the vote share for the third-place MIR.

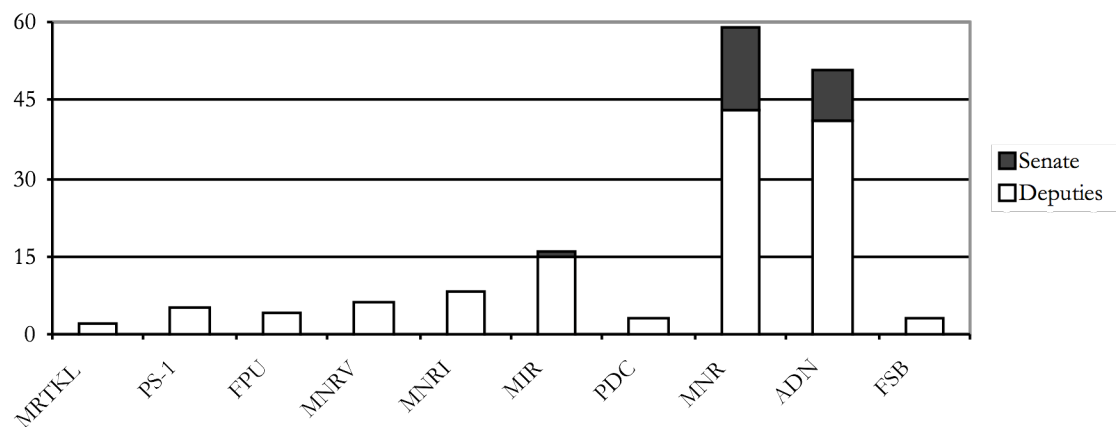
Ten parties won parliamentary representation, though only three (MNR, ADN, MIR) won seats in the upper chamber (see Figure 5.2). This was an increase from nine parties that won representation in 1980, due in part to the expansion of the lower house from 117 to 130 members (which increased district magnitudes). Both ADN and MNR increased their representation in the legislature. Yet despite placing first in the popular vote, ADN won fewer legislative seats than the MNR. Wins in seven of nine departments also gave the MNR a solid majority of the Senate.

Leftist parties lost their overall share of representation. The 1985 House of Deputies included five socialist-left parties (including MIR) with a total of 38 seats (29.9% of seats) in contrast to the 53 seats (41.7% of seats) held in 1980 by only two parties: UDP and PS-1 (the Socialist Party, founded by Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz). The left's decline was sharpest in the Senate, with a single seat (for the center-left MIR) in contrast to eleven in 1980. The shift by voters away from the left was evident in the minor parties as well. PS-1, which did not participate in the UDP government, saw its share of seats drop by half. The center-left Christian democrats lost one seat relative to 1980. In contrast, both the *kataristas* and the right-wing Falangists held onto their previous seat shares. While the UDP government had

never enjoyed a parliamentary majority, the 1985 parliament was now clearly dominated by the right and center-right

Figure 5.2

Legislative seats by party, 1985



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

The use of a simple D'Hondt counting formula should have led to a slight over-representation of the two largest parties. But because parliamentary seats are awarded by departments (where MNR and ADN votes were differently concentrated), the effects was mixed. The largest winner was the MNR, which was slightly over-represented, while ADN was slightly under-represented. MIR was also slightly over-represented. The effects for the remaining parties that won representation was also mixed, though with absolute values lower than a full percent point. The exception was FSB, which won two of its three seats in departments with small district magnitudes and was over-represented by +1.0%.

Broken down by department, 1985 saw the MNR win across seven of the country's nine departments (see Table 5.1). Where the MNR did least favorably was in the rural

countryside around La Paz, as well as in rural Chuquisaca, Oruro, and Potosí. These were much the same areas where ADN fared poorly, though Banzer did better among urban voters than Paz Estenssoro did, where he won six of the nine department capitals, which tipped the national vote count in his favor. MIR votes were most heavily concentrated in Potosí, Chuquisaca, and Oruro—roughly the same areas where FPU and other leftist parties found their support. Finally, while the two *katarista* parties (MRTKL and MRTK) won only 3.19% of the total national vote, their vote was heavily concentrated in the rural Altiplano—the very areas where both MNR and ADN fared poorly. These regions would continue to consistently vote against systemic parties in high numbers throughout the democratic period, forming a core constituency for anti-establishment political parties and social movements.

Table 5.1

Percent of valid vote for lead 1985 presidential candidates, by department

	Hugo Banzer (ADN)	Paz Estenssoro (MNR)	Paz Zamora (MIR)	Jordán Pando (MNRI)
La Paz	<b>36.39</b>	19.57	9.12	6.52
Cochabamba	<b>34.26</b>	31.00	11.51	4.10
Oruro	28.33	<b>28.86</b>	12.05	10.43
Potosí	20.88	<b>33.06</b>	15.19	6.13
Chuquisaca	21.32	<b>25.33</b>	22.07	2.53
Tarija	24.13	<b>52.81</b>	6.65	4.27
Santa Cruz	38.60	<b>42.77</b>	5.57	3.33
Beni	37.44	<b>38.71</b>	6.34	1.97
Pando	33.30	<b>45.96</b>	4.43	4.06
National	32.82	30.36	10.19	5.48

Data provided by Bolivia's National Electoral Court; department winners in bold.

Despite an overwhelming defeat for the left Paz Estenssoro and Banzer seemed hardly prepared to work together, having focused most of their campaign attacks against each other. Having won a parliamentary plurality (including a majority of the Senate), the

MNR was eager to see Estenssoro named president. Banzer, of course, claimed that the office should instead go to the popular vote winner. The tense atmosphere of the 1985 election would linger through July into early August, when the new parliament was scheduled to convene.

### **Government Formation**

Because no candidate won an absolute majority of the popular vote, parliament was called upon to select a president. At first, Banzer insisted on respect for his plurality victory, citing the 1980 precedent. But it was soon clear that a Banzer presidency was unlikely and that a Banzer presidency would be heavily resisted, leading to the kind of ungovernability that had paralyzed the UDP government. As the days dragged on, Banzer softened his rhetoric, publicly stating that he would welcome a coalition government. By early August, several leftist legislators—including those from MIR—had formed an *anti-banzerista* alliance backing Paz Estenssoro. In the end, 94 members of parliament voted for the MNR candidate; only the 51 ADN delegates voted for Banzer. On 6 August 1985, Paz Estenssoro assumed the presidency for his third and final time.<sup>155</sup>

Soon after, however, Banzer and Paz Estenssoro would sign an agreement—the “Pacto por la Democracia” (Pact for Democracy)—forming a coalition government that gave Paz Estenssoro the legislative supermajority he needed to pursue structural economic reforms. On 29 August, Paz Estenssoro unveiled his government’s plan to handle the economic crisis. The executive decree *DS 21060* spelled out a New Economic Policy (NEP)

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<sup>155</sup> Though Paz Estenssoro was elected in 1964, he was removed from office by the Barrientos coup before the start of the presidential term. Thus, Paz Estenssoro was elected president four times (1951-2, 1960, 1964, 1985) but only served three presidential terms.



that officially ended the economic model established in 1952 and set the foundation for a neoliberal market model.<sup>156</sup> The economic “shock therapy” reforms were unpopular and lacked support from the left. And though the NEP policies were not announced during the MNR’s electoral campaign, they coincided with many of the economic solutions proposed by ADN. Thus, on 16 October, Banzer and Paz Estenssoro signed a formal agreement meant to provide governability and political stability while imposing the shock economic recovery program. Hailed by the pact’s members as a means to secure and consolidate democracy, the MNR-ADN alliance was denounced by most opposition parties, including members of MBL (Movimiento Bolivia Libre), PS-1, the COB, and some PDC members.<sup>157</sup>

It is difficult to get inside the “black box” of the MNR-ADN alliance. At the time, both Paz Estenssoro and Banzer hailed the pact, claiming that it was a necessary measure in the face of a crushing economic crisis. In later references, MNR and ADN leaders would regularly argue that the pact was a foundational moment in Bolivia’s political stability (Peñaranda 2004; Bedregal 2002). Clearly, the economic crisis was a significant factor. Another was the experience of the “failed” UDP government, which had been unable to take drastic or radical steps to stabilize the economy. Personal interest may have also been a powerful motivator: because a secret addendum to the pact called for the MNR’s support for Banzer’s 1989 presidential bid, the pact served to both insulate Banzer from direct responsibility for the reforms and gain support for future presidential aspirations. Another source of pressure, of course, included international pressure—primarily from the United

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<sup>156</sup> Despite the importance of the NEP reforms, much of the statist economic model remained in place until 1995, when the state-owned industries were “capitalized” during the first Sánchez de Lozada presidency. For a review of the NEP structural reforms, see Sachs and Morales 1988.

<sup>157</sup> Reactions from MBL, PS-1, COB, PDC in CEDIB 1989, p. 32-33. While some members of PDC were critical of the pact, the party soon officially entered the coalition.

States and other western powers—bent on promoting democratic stability and governance throughout the region.

Most observers agreed that the Pact for Democracy established the pattern for subsequent coalition governments. René Antonio Mayorga (1991) described the pact as a “second transition” away from the “conflictual” democracy that led to political instability towards one based on consensus—what he calls “pacted democracy”—that provides both legitimacy and governability. The MNR-ADN alliance (which was eventually also supported by PDC) was based on some ideological convergence, especially regarding economic policy and the need for structural reform. But the agreement also included power-sharing agreements described by Peñaranda Bojanic (2004, p. 114-115) as, in large measure, about access to state patronage (or *pegas*).<sup>158</sup>

Regardless of its motivations, the Pact for Democracy provided Paz Estenssoro with an overwhelming parliamentary majority—66.9% of the House of Deputies and 96.3% of the Senate—which could block any effective opposition (see Table 5.2). The pact also included an implicit agreement that the MNR would support a 1989 Banzer presidential bid, a frequent topic of the coalition’s bipartisan commission weekly meetings. The pact would last until 9 February 1989, when the MNR’s emerging new leader, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (the architect of the NEP reforms), declared his intention to challenge Banzer for the presidency.

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<sup>158</sup> For a critical evaluation of the causes and consequences of the MNR-ADN Pact for Democracy, see Peñaranda Bojanic 2004, p. 111-126. She argues that ADN’s participation in the Paz Estenssoro government was, in part, meant to provide political cover for the unpopularity of structural economic reforms (since ADN was not the principal architect of the reforms) even while working to promote them. Additionally, the pact provided Banzer with a large number of patronage jobs he could distribute to his followers, which allowed him to keep ADN together as a political vehicle.

Table 5.2

## Government and opposition parliamentary strength, 1985

	Deputies	Senate	Total
Government parties	87	26	113
<i>MNR</i>	43	16	59
<i>ADN</i>	41	10	51
<i>PDC</i>	3		3
Opposition parties	43	1	44
<i>MIR</i>	15	1	16
<i>MNRI</i>	8		8
<i>FSB</i>	2		2
<i>MNRV</i>	6		6
<i>FPU</i>	4		4
<i>PS-1</i>	5		5
<i>MRTKL</i>	2		2

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

When Paz Estenssoro stepped down from office on 6 August 1989, it marked the first time a president had finished a full term since 1964. On the balance, the MNR-led government had successfully stopped hyperinflation and brought some modest economic recovery, though at a large social cost.<sup>159</sup> The neoliberal structural reforms clearly benefited some social sectors over others. More importantly, however, the 1985-1989 period marked the beginning of a new liberal-pluralist political discourse. After 1985, neither the MNR nor ADN—they were later joined by MIR—would steer far from the political-economic model installed by the Paz Estenssoro government. *DS 21060* would serve as the foundation for future economic policy for the next twenty years, followed by a “second generation” of

<sup>159</sup> Despite modest economic growth and a substantial reduction in the public deficit, the economic growth was outstripped by population growth. The four-year Paz Estenssoro government also saw significant increases in both poverty and unemployment.

structural reforms during the 1990s. Likewise, the kind of “pacted democracy” initiated by the Pact for Democracy ended the pre-1985 expression of electoral politics as a form of confrontational “political warfare” and instead inaugurated a new system of based on more moderate competition followed by consensus-making. This was facilitated, in part, by the sharp decline of leftist electoral alternatives. After 1985, the major parties all embraced the basic neoliberal formula; the ideological space within which major parties campaigned was reduced. Of course, the more “nationalist” rhetoric and discourse would continue to resonate, but it would no longer dominate (it would also slowly diminish in intensity).

### **The 1989 Election**

The 1989 general election was the second election after the transition to democracy and the first election to follow an uninterrupted presidential term. The controversial election of Jaime Paz Zamora to the presidency also marked the first (and only) time a third place candidate would win the presidency. The unlikely alliance between the center-left MIR and the center-right ADN also marked the first true coalition power-sharing government and tied the three largest parties (eventually called the “systemic” parties) ideologically closer together.<sup>160</sup> From 1989 until 2003, ADN and MIR would accompany each other, whether in the government or the opposition. Despite a slight recovery for the left, the Paz Zamora government consolidated the neoliberal policies initiated by Paz Estenssoro. The election also suggested the establishment of a stable party system concentrated on a few key political figures; nearly all of the parties and candidates that campaigned in this election went on to participate in future elections. Perhaps more importantly, while the 1989 election saw the

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<sup>160</sup> Unlike the more explicit MIR-ADN government, the MNR-ADN government was primarily based on ADN’s parliamentary support for the Paz Estenssoro government.

emergence of the first neopopulist threat to the systemic parties, it was regionally limited and not a threat to the emerging three-party system.

### **Parties and Candidates**

A total of ten parties participated in the 1989 general election, eight fewer than in 1985. The sharpest reduction was in parties of the socialist left (from eleven to two), now gathered around PS-1 and IU (which included most of the 1985 FPU coalition members). They were joined by the center-left MIN (Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional). The *katarista* movement was again represented by two parties, MRTKL and FULKA (Frente Único de Liberación Katarista). The 1989 election also marked the debut of the neopopulist Condepa. The three largest parties from 1985—ADN (now center-right), MNR (center-right), and MIR (center-left)—entered the campaign confident of maintaining or expanding their position. FSB again represented the far right.

Despite the understanding between Banzer and Paz Estenssoro that the MNR would support a Banzer candidacy in 1989, the MNR (now led by Sánchez de Lozada) announced that it would not support ADN, but rather seek a second consecutive government.<sup>161</sup> The incumbent MNR nominated as its candidate Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, Paz Estenssoro's planning minister and the architect of the NEP. His nomination signaled a decisive center-right shift by a new generation of MNR leadership no longer tied directly to the legacy of the

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<sup>161</sup> The MNR-ADN alliance ruptured after Sánchez de Lozada won the MNR internal elections in 1988 and became the party's new leader. He convinced the party that it should not support a former dictator in a democratic election.

1952 Revolution.<sup>162</sup> The phenomenon of *gonismo* had already broken completely from the MNR's previous socioeconomic policies and turned the party decidedly towards a liberal-pluralist orientation. Finally, Sánchez de Lozada's public image as an able technocrat with no-nonsense economic solutions and no historical ties to the party's previous involvement in coups made him an appealing candidate to the urban middle classes, now the MNR's core constituency. The MNR was also joined by the small PDB (Partido Democrático Boliviano) led by Eudoro Galindo, formerly the 1985 ADN vice presidential candidate.<sup>163</sup> As in 1985, the MNR entered the election confident of victory; while its economic reforms were unpopular with many sectors (primarily those previously employed in state industries), the effectiveness of the stabilization package—particularly against inflation—was still popular among other important sectors (primarily the middle classes).

Banzer was again ADN's presidential candidate. By this time, the party had moved decidedly into a center-right position.<sup>164</sup> after its alliance with the Christian Democrats. The PDC leader, Luis Ossio Sanjinés, was named the ADN-PDC vice presidential candidate.<sup>165</sup>

In an effort to distance itself from its authoritarian past, the Banzer campaign tried to

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<sup>162</sup> While the MNR is not associated with any of the various political internationals, it has a close working relationship (through the Fundación Milenio) with German's CDU-based Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

<sup>163</sup> Galindo's alliance with Sánchez de Lozada can be interpreted two ways: either it represents an ideological or policy-oriented convergence that signaled the close proximity between the MNR and ADN (making an alliance with either party predictable) or it represents a calculus based on promised shares of state patronage. Regardless, the move signaled a marked willingness and ability of political elites to cooperate.

<sup>164</sup> ADN is an associate member of the International Democrat Union (IDU), an international association of center-right, primarily Christian democratic, parties. IDU member parties include Germany's CDU and CSU, Spain's Partido Popular, Australia's Liberal Party, and the US Republican Party.

<sup>165</sup> Ossio Sanjinés' alliance with Banzer can also be taken as indication of either ideological convergence or as motivated by desire for *pegar*. Regardless, it illustrates a behavioral convergence by political elites. PDC is a member of the Christian Democrat International (CDI), which shares members with the IDU. CDI members include Chile's Christian Democrats, Venezuela's COPEI, Peru's PPC, and Ireland's Fine Gael.

present ADN as a moderate, responsible, democratic party. Similarly, Banzer's campaign hoped to gain credit for the successful economic recovery plan it had supported from parliament. Overall, the ADN-PDC campaign hoped to again place first at the ballot, and publicly called for other parties to respect the plurality winner.

MIR entered the 1989 general election stronger than it had in the previous election with a record as the largest opposition party. Paz Zamora was again the party's presidential candidate. This time, the party was joined by FRI (Frente Revolucionario de Izquierda, led by Oscar Zamora Medinacelli), MNRV (led by Carlos Serrate), a dissident faction of PS-1, and most of what remained of MNRI. Essentially, by 1989 MIR represented those elements of the former UDP that had moved into the center-left.<sup>166</sup> With the support of its new allies, MIR confidently expected to expand its electoral support from 1985 and even announced that it expected to win at the ballot (to establish a "New Majority"). In 1989, MIR again presented itself as a leftist alternative to both ADN and MNR—though less radical than IU or PS-1—even while the party continued to move into a center-left or "social democratic" position.<sup>167</sup>

One of the most notable events of the 1989 general election was the political debut of Condepa (Conciencia de Patria), a populist party founded by Carlos Palenque, a popular musician and talk radio personality from the city of El Alto. The success of party's marked

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<sup>166</sup> Again, these new alliances signaled an elite convergence, regardless of the motivations of the specific individuals involved. There was an ideological cohesion to the alliance, however. Each of the parties (except for PS-1) involved was closely tied to the MNR's "revolutionary nationalism" rather than to strict orthodox socialist tendencies. Additionally, Zamora Medinacelli was a cousin of Paz Zamora.

<sup>167</sup> It is still accurate to describe MIR as a "center-left" or "social democratic" party, even today. MIR is the only Bolivian party officially a member of social democratic Socialist International (SI), which it joined in 1971. SI member parties include Argentina's UCR, Chile's Socialist Party, Germany's SDP, France's Socialist Party, Peru's APRA, and both Mexico's PRI and PRD.

the emergence of a new generation of powerful “neopopulist” or “outsider” parties during the 1990s.<sup>168</sup> Condepa was founded at Tiwanaku—the historic and mythical center of Aymara culture—on 21 September 1988. The party served principally as a political vehicle for Palenque, who was angry that the Paz Estenssoro government had briefly closed down his Sistema RTP (Radio Televisión Popular) because of his criticism of the government. While the party lacked any clear political ideology, it did articulate the frustrations of the *cholo*—Andean-mestizo urban (mostly poor)<sup>169</sup>—residents of El Alto and La Paz. Though the party was critical of neoliberal policies of the 1980s, it also displayed a marked tendency towards nationalist-right (rather than socialist) rhetoric, similar to Barrientos (but with a more notable “autochthonous” self-image). Condepa would go on to play an important role in Bolivian politics, and paved the road for other populist, anti-political, anti-systemic movements that followed. Nevertheless, Condepa would prove unable to survive the death (on 9 March 1997) of its charismatic leader.

The rest of the electoral field was much less crowded than it had been in 1985. This election marked a reversal of the partisan fractionalization, especially regarding the left. IU was now a catch-all alliance of various left-socialist parties, including those that had participated in the FPU.<sup>170</sup> The coalition’s presidential candidate, Antonio Aranibar (MBL), hoped chiefly to improve the left’s performance relative to 1985; as in 1989, they had little

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<sup>168</sup> See R. Mayorga 1995. For a critical evaluation of CONDEPA as a “neopopulist” party, see Alenda 2003. For a broader discussion of populism and neopopulism in Latin America, see Weyland 2000, Conniff 1999, and Demmers (et al) 2001.

<sup>169</sup> This definition coincides with the one used by Marcia Stephenson (1999), who describes *cholo* as “an urban mestizo whose cultural and ethnic ties associate him more closely with communal indigenous practices than with western traditions and values” (see p. 1-9). While the word can carry pejorative meaning, it is also often used in the Bolivian political lexicon to describe a group that is neither “indigenous” nor “mestizo.”

<sup>170</sup> The 1989 IU alliance included MBL (formerly MIR-BL), PCB, EJE (Eje de Convergencia Nacional), MAS-U, and another dissident faction of PS-1.



pretension of winning the presidency. MRTKL was led this time by Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, who would go on to become the 1993 vice presidential candidate in an MNR-MRTKL alliance. Genaro Flores was again a presidential candidate, this time for FULKA, a more radical *katarista* party. The Bolivian Falange began the electoral campaign with an independent candidate for president—Max Fernández, who would later go on to found the neopopulist UCS—though his resignation mid campaign left the party in disarray and without a presidential candidate.

### **The Electoral Campaign**

In contrast to 1985, the 1989 general election was conducted in an atmosphere of considerable calm. There were no rumors of civil war or military coups or other attempts to interfere with the democratic process. And while accusations of voter registration fraud abounded (they would become a stock feature of every subsequent election) there were no calls to reject or boycott the electoral process itself. The new secretary-general of the COB, Simón Reyes, called on Bolivians to go to the polls to reject the NEP (*Los Tiempos* 1989c). Rather than calling for a boycott, as he had in 1985, Juan Lechín called on voters to spoil their ballots—as did Max Fernández—to show their rejection of the MNR-ADN-MIR “tripartite.”<sup>171</sup> They were joined by dissident Christian democrat Remo Di Natale, who called on voters to cast blank ballots (*Los Tiempos* 1989c). As in 1985, it was clear early on that the three front runners would be Banzer (ADN), Sánchez de Lozada (MNR), and Paz Zamora (MIR). The three campaigns again focused principally on the personal qualities and histories of their presidential candidates.

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<sup>171</sup> It is interesting to note that as early as 1989, many political “outsiders” (syndicalists, Marxists, populists) already considered MIR as part of an elite “system” that included the MNR and ADN.

The electoral campaign was also marked by a substantial degree of negative campaigning little decreased from 1985. While smaller parties focused most of their vitriol on the incumbent government's neoliberal economic policies, the three major parties instead focused on "character" issues. The MNR campaign made frequent references to Banzer's dictatorial past and questioned the ADN leader's genuine commitment to democracy. During the final days of his campaign, Sánchez de Lozada called the NEP reforms of the 1985-1989 Paz Estenssoro government an economic success, but promised to follow up with a "New Social Policy" targeting employment, housing, health care, and education. While projecting an image as a modernist, progressive reformer, Sánchez de Lozada also appealed to the traditional revolutionary-nationalist party legacy. Closing his campaign in La Paz, he referenced his "Aymara roots" (his grandmother) and proclaimed that he felt touched by "the poetry and creativity of the Cochabamba valley [where he was born] Quechua" (*Los Tiempos* 1989d). The next day, in Cochabamba, he appealed to the memory of "Dr. Víctor Paz" and the legacies of the national revolution; he was joined by his vice presidential candidate, Walter Guevara Arze (a veteran of the 1952 revolution), who appealed to the MNR's traditional old guard (*Los Tiempos* 1989c).

In response, the ADN campaign attacked Sánchez de Lozada's accented Spanish (he had grown up in exile in the United States) with the slogan "*ningún gringo puede gobernarnos*" ("no gringo can govern us", CEDIB 1989, p. 34). In part, the MNR-ADN break had become a personal political vendetta for Banzer, who refused to engage in a public one-on-one debate with Sánchez de Lozada, calling such demands nothing more than a "caprice"

and declaring that he had “nothing to say to someone who breaks his word.”<sup>172</sup> For his part, Sánchez de Lozada had declared that it was “not possible to continue [in a political alliance] with a partner who does not want to defend democracy” (CEDIB 1989, p. 33). It was clear from the start that a second MNR-ADN alliance was, at best, unlikely. Much of the ADN electoral campaign was dedicated to either extolling the virtues of its party leader or denouncing his “gringo”—and therefore not truly “national”—opponent.

This conflict between the two winners of the 1985 election encouraged the Paz Zamora campaign to freely attack both center-right candidates. Frequently ignored by both Banzer and Sánchez de Lozada throughout the campaign, he leveled copycat attacks on both candidates, citing both parties (the MNR and ADN) as similar representatives of the right and questioned how democratic their alliance was. Paz Zamora also distanced himself from his MNR and ADN rivals by proclaiming, even in the final days of the campaign in the city of Cochabamba, that he would repeal *DS 21060* if elected president (*Los Tiempos* 1989e).

Similarly, the other parties of the left (IU and PS-1) considered the MNR and ADN candidates indistinguishable members of a “new oligarchy”—though they often also included MIR as a member of the *nueva rosca* (CEDIB 1989, p. 34). The campaigns harshest criticisms, however, were leveled at Banzer, with frequent mentions of the violence and repression during the former dictator’s regime. The IU campaign was the most active, particularly around Cochabamba, where it had established ties with the emerging *cocalero* movement. The party’s presidential candidate, Antonio Aranibar regularly criticized the three systemic parties for similarities, while calling on greater government attention to rural,

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<sup>172</sup> In a full-page ad (*Los Tiempos* 1989i) Banzer was citing as stating: “... the ADN *jefe* has nothing to say to a flip-flopper (lit. *incosecuente*); he has nothing to say to or hear from someone who forgot about Bolivia, breaking a Pact, cheapening his word, and making a mockery of his obligations.” See also *Los Tiempos* 1989h.

*campesino* affairs—including calls for bilingual education reforms. The party closed its campaign in the city of Cochabamba, where Aranibar called on voters to support efforts by IU to reunify the left. Among the speakers was Evo Morales, the young leader of the *cocalero* movement, who was campaigning on behalf of IU (*Los Tiempos* 1989c). Still, the left did not expect to win the election—though they expected to improve their standings relative to 1985—and were preparing before the election to form an opposition bloc IU-PS-1-MRTKL (*Los Tiempos* 1989f).

Condepa's campaign received little press attention outside Palenque's own radio and television network—Canal 4 and Radio Metropolitana.<sup>173</sup> Palenque was extremely well-known, both as a former member of Los Caminantes, a popular and successful Andean folk-music group and through his “*el Compadre*” on-air personality.<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, he never figured in any of the polls and was regularly relegated to the position of a minor candidate with low expectations. Though Condepa would go on to a surprise showing at the polls, Palenque's appeal (as evident from election results) was almost exclusively limited to the city of El Alto and the Aymara portions of the Altiplano.

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<sup>173</sup> The limited coverage of Condepa's campaign behavior may be do to selection bias, since 1989 data relies exclusively on a Cochabamba city newspaper, *Los Tiempos*; the CEDIB materials did not include a single article covering the Palenque campaign.

<sup>174</sup> Together, Radio Metropolitana and Canal 4 comprised the Radio Televisión Popular (RTP) network. Palenque's *Tribunal del Pueblo* radio and television program served as an outlet for popular discontent at everyday social, political, and economic injustices. The show frequently included guests who had been wronged in some way (ranging from complaints about lack of social services to spousal abuse), and sought to find “people's justice” for them, all while promoting a sense of community centered around the charismatic Palenque (*el Compadre*) and his co-host, (*la Comadre*) Remedios Loza. Though the comparisons are not perfect, Carlos Palenque was similar to popular American talk show hosts such as Jerry Springer (himself a political figure), Maury Povich, Montel Williams, Ricky Lake, or Oprah Winfrey.

Overall, the campaigns centered principally on personal attacks aimed at the top candidates. Banzer was attacked for his previous dictatorship and described as unfit to lead a democratic polity. Sánchez de Lozada was frequently attacked for his English-accented Spanish and was portrayed as a wealthy entrepreneur who would only sell the country to foreign interests. The only campaigns that frequently made use of appeals to policy issues or agendas were MNR and IU, though these were mostly in passing. Attacks from the left against the NEP also rarely extended beyond anti-neoliberal criticisms to include concrete suggestions for policy alternatives. Only one journalist, José Nogales, is credited with asking questions about “the issues” at the 30 April “Foro Debate” hosted by the La Paz Press Association, though these were limited to questions about how the three candidates financed their campaigns and, specifically, whether MIR’s finances were tied to “narco-trafficking” (*Los Tiempos* 1989e).

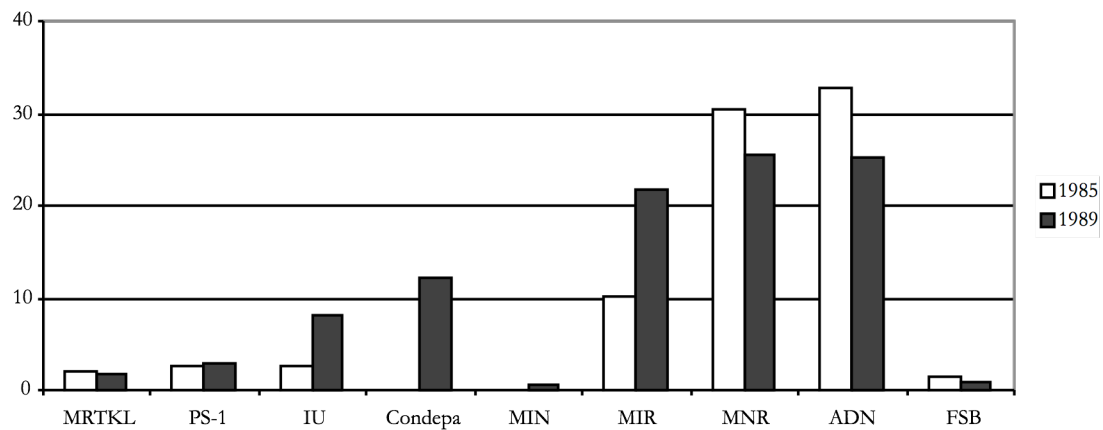
## **Election Results**

The 1989 election was marked by four interesting developments: First, the election ended in the so-called “triple tie” between the three front-runners. Sánchez de Lozada came in first with 25.65% of the valid vote, followed closely by Banzer with 25.24% (a difference of 5,815 votes); Paz Zamora came in third with 21.83% of the valid vote, doubling his share from 1985. Second, the dramatic debut of Condepa, which became the fourth largest force in parliament (with nine deputies and two senators) despite receiving less than three percent of the vote in any department outside La Paz (where it won with 30.08%). Third, though the systemic parties again dominated the polls, the left did slightly recover from 1985 (see Figure 5.3). Finally, the MNR plurality victory would be the only time an incumbent (or *oficialista*)

party candidate would place first in an election.<sup>175</sup> Together, the systemic parties won roughly the same vote share they had in 1985, representing three quarters of the electorate, though their respective shares shifted (as the “median voter” shifted left, relative to 1985).

Figure 5.3

Change in support for parties between 1985 and 1989, as percent of valid vote



Data provided by Bolivia’s Corte Nacional Electoral.

Though the MNR and ADN candidate were again the two front-runners, their positions were reversed. Banzer’s vote share declined (by a sizeable 7.59%), a trend that continued into the next elections; the ADN leader and perennial presidential candidate would never again receive the vote share he did in 1985. The MNR vote share also declined relative to 1985, though in smaller magnitude. Paz Zamora again came in third, though this time much closer to the front-runners and with a much broader share of parliamentary seats.

<sup>175</sup> Because the Bolivian constitution does not allow for presidential re-election, no actual incumbent president has run for office. Nevertheless, the Bolivian political lexicon describes the candidates for the party in government as *oficialista* candidates. I use “incumbent” in the same way.

The election results also showed a continued dilution of votes across a number of parties, causing the measure for effective number of electoral parties to expand (to 5.0). Finally, voter participation in the 1989 general election was mixed. Voter turnout declined sharply to 73.63%. This would remain little changed (but in decline) until 2005. In contrast, the number of blank and null votes decreased (to 4.36% and 5.67%, respectively).

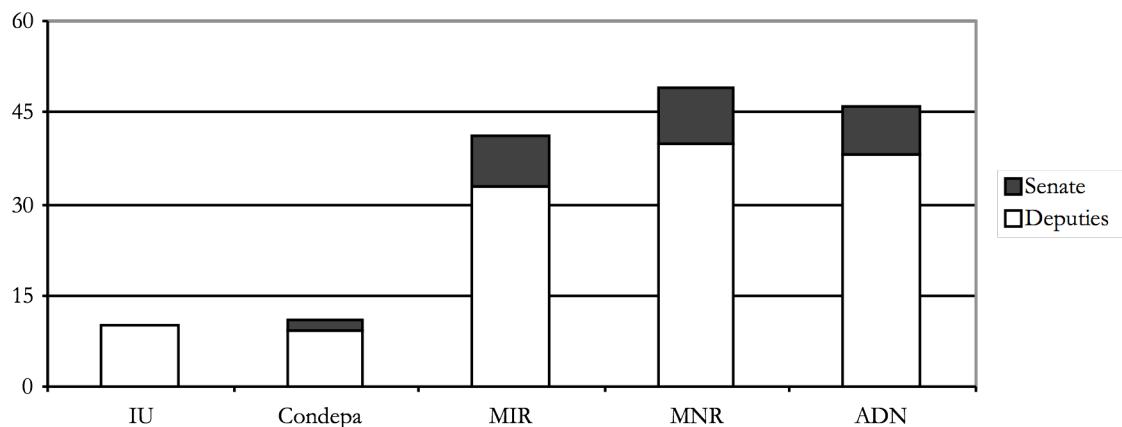
Though the effective number of electoral parties increased from 1985, the effective number of legislative parties actually decreased (to 3.9). Only five parties won parliamentary representation—the fewest in any election until 2005—and only four of these won seats to the upper chamber. The change partly reflected a change in the electoral law, which altered the way seats were allocated in each district. Previously, remainder seats (those left over after seats were awarded according to the D'Hondt electoral quotients) were distributed with preference toward the smaller parties. The 1989 general election used a double quotient system, which depressed the number of seats for small parties (remainder seats were only awarded to parties that had already won at least one seat based on electoral quotients). Thus, even though several small parties actually increased their share of votes, they were not awarded seats in parliament. This led to a hunger strike by candidates from MRTKL, PS-1, and IU who argued that their parties should be awarded seats (CEDIB 1989, p. 39-43). Overall, the change from simple D'Hondt to a double quotient electoral rule had a mixed effect on party representation. While absolute national disproportionality of seats to votes increased (from 0.032 to 0.069) between the two elections, differences within departments were of much smaller magnitudes (though increasing in six of nine departments).

Another controversy evolved from the composition of the Corte Nacional Electoral (CNE), which had been changed in 1985 to represent only the three largest parties. The seven-member body was composed of three members appointed by the MNR, three by

ADN, and one by MIR. Following the posting of the official election results, the MNR initiated a legal complaint before the body, charging that ADN and MIR had conspired to manipulate the votes to their favor (CEDIB 1989, p. 36-38). Though these charges were later dismissed, they formed the basis for a new round of multiparty negotiations aimed at reforming the CNE and making the body more autonomous.

Figure 5.4

Legislative seats by party, 1989



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

The election results suggests sizeable discontentment with neoliberal economic policies. While the Pact for Democracy parties decreased their combined vote share (by 12.31%), their chief center-left rival (MIR) made substantial gains and led the left and center-left to an aggregate increase from 1985. Most significantly, the IU—which comprised the left wing of the former UDP alliance—more than tripled its share of valid votes. In aggregate, interestingly, the left (including MIR) only increased its vote by less than three percent



between the two elections.<sup>176</sup> Excluding MIR (which after 1989 moved decidedly toward the center), the combined left actually continued to decline, losing more than a third of its vote share from 1985 to 1989. Where did anti-neoliberal discontent go?

More than any other party, Condepa captured the new anti-neoliberal constituency—particularly among the residents of El Alto and the poorest quarters of La Paz (the metropolitan La Paz-El Alto area alone accounted for more than two thirds of all Condepa votes). Condepa's 1989 performance presaged the future role El Alto residents (and residents of the La Paz *tembladeras*, the shantytowns built along the cliffs overlooking the city) would have in Bolivian politics. Popular discontent with neoliberal policies was significant, but it was not shifting back to established leftist or socialist alternatives; it was instead expressing itself in new populist movements.

Broken down by departments, the 1989 general election saw a much more divided set of two-party contests across departments. Despite its plurality victory, the MNR only won three departments (Cochabamba, Tarija, and Santa Cruz) and placed second in another three (Potosí, Beni, and Pando). The second-place ADN only won two departments (Beni and Pando), though it placed second in another four (Chuquisaca, La Paz, Oruro, and Santa Cruz). The third-place MIR won three departments (Oruro, Potosí, and Chuquisaca) and placed second in two others (Cochabamba and Tarija). The surprise of the election was Condepa's victory in La Paz, the most populous department.

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<sup>176</sup> The aggregate 1985 share of valid votes for all "leftist" parties (MIR, ACP, AUR, MNRV, IU, MNRI, POR, FPU, FNP, PS-1, MNRI-1) was 30.12%. The aggregate 1989 share of valid votes for the same bloc (MIR, IU, PS-1, MIN) was 33.34%.

Table 5.3

Percent of valid vote for lead 1989 presidential candidates, by department

	Sánchez de Lozada (MNR)	Hugo Banzer (ADN)	Paz Zamora (MIR)	Carlos Palenque (Condepa)
La Paz	18.80	20.91	17.46	<b>30.08</b>
Cochabamba	<b>26.16</b>	25.45	25.45	2.49
Oruro	25.42	25.46	<b>29.39</b>	2.92
Potosí	24.43	23.11	<b>26.22</b>	1.72
Chuquisaca	21.86	23.00	<b>25.45</b>	0.90
Tarija	<b>41.12</b>	23.85	23.97	0.81
Santa Cruz	<b>35.02</b>	33.44	22.43	0.97
Beni	35.76	<b>38.00</b>	15.24	1.32
Pando	37.10	<b>38.62</b>	15.19	0.81
National	25.65	25.24	21.83	12.25

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral; department winners in bold.

The geographical patterns in 1989 were pronounced. The MNR and ADN imposed themselves in the *media luna*, where together they captured between two thirds and three quarters of all valid votes. In Tarija, the MNR and MIR similarly captured two thirds of all the department's valid votes. In contrast, the Andean departments were evenly split between the three largest parties, with little difference between them (the difference between MIR and ADN in Cochabamba was only nine votes). Even in La Paz, where none of the three systemic parties won, the contest for second place was close. And while IU won ten parliamentary seats, the left-socialist alliance did not win a single seat outside of the Andean departments, leaving the four lowland departments entirely to the MNR, ADN, and MIR. Regionally, the 1989 election demonstrated a consolidation of the three parties (especially the MNR and ADN) in the *media luna*, with more fractionalized party competition in the Andes. As in 1985, all three systemic parties fared least well in the city of El Alto and the rural Altiplano (particularly around Lake Titicaca).

Again, the vote for Condepa in the urban radius of La Paz-El Alto is significant. Nowhere else did such a large share (and volume) of voters clearly reject the existing political system. But while they turned away from the three systemic parties, they did not embrace leftist alternatives. Instead, they turned towards a new populist, anti-political movement led by a charismatic leader. Unlike other “anti-neoliberal” political movements, Condepa was founded spontaneously, months before the election, principally in response to Palenque’s personal conflicts with the incumbent government. The movement lacked leaders with established, historical trajectories of political activity or ideological formation. Instead, the movement rallied principally around the figure—and microphone—of Carlos Palenque. The pro-Condepa vote was concentrated almost exclusively in the urban La Paz-El Alto metropolis, demonstrating a markedly weak attachment by its voters towards established political alternatives. No other electorate demonstrated such a dramatic electoral shift.

### **Government Formation**

As in 1985, because no candidate won an absolute majority, parliament was called upon to select a president. The “triple tie” between MNR, ADN, and MIR, however, placed an incredible strain on the ability of a five-party parliament to select a chief executive. Unlike in 1985, however, the idea of a multiparty, post-electoral coalition (or “pact”) was broadly discussed—even by the candidates—long before the 7 May elections. Sánchez de Lozada announced the possibility of an alliance between the two eventual front-runners and hinted squarely at a desire to re-establish an MNR-ADN pact (*Los Tiempos* 1989e).<sup>177</sup> In response,

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<sup>177</sup> In his reference to potential co-government between the two front-runners, Sánchez de Lozada described the election as “a contest between two heavyweights and one rooster-weight” (the rooster is a MIR symbol). The reference to an MNR-ADN alliance was denounced by the Cochabamba regional labor federation; its

ADN announced its willingness to enter into a “concertation” in order to build a stable, responsible government alliance—so long as the agreement respected ADN’s commitment to the rule of law and the need to change from an interventionist state to one that “left Bolivians free to pursue economic growth”—a move that echoed the party’s 1985 appeals (*Los Tiempos* 1989d).<sup>178</sup> As in 1985, Banzer (who expected victory) called on rival parties to “agree to respect the first majority [plurality winner]” in order to promote democratic and institutional stability; the move was firmly rejected by other parties as “unconstitutional” and “demagogic” (*Los Tiempos* 1989g). Even before official results were announced, there was a general expectation of a new version of the Pact for Democracy (*Los Tiempos* 1989b). Nevertheless, appeals by Sánchez de Lozada for an MNR-ADN alliance went firmly rejected by Banzer. Days after the election, ADN began making public overtures towards MIR, as spokesperson Guillermo Fortún declared the party’s willingness to enter into a political accord with MIR—and reiterating that it would not negotiate with MNR because of its “disloyalty” (*Los Tiempos* 1989a). Meanwhile, Sánchez de Lozada declared his willingness to entertain a coalition with any party that wished to continue his political-economic program (*Los Tiempos* 1989a). The combination of a triple tie and heated rivalry between the two front-runners made the search for a coalition agreement lengthy, lasting nearly three months.

MIR’s dramatic improvement relative to 1985 threw a wrench in the coalition-building process and gave Paz Zamora the kingmaker role. He would not relinquish his constitutional possibility to the presidency and likewise refused to agree to support either of

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spokesman declared that he sensed something “concealed” in the rupture of the Pact for Democracy and claimed that the ADN-MNR electoral competition was a façade.

<sup>178</sup> The announcement was made by party spokesperson, Mario Rolón Anaya. Such proposals were a frequent element of the Banzer campaign. See also *Los Tiempos* 1989f.

the two front-runners. Paz Zamora still led a social democratic party with significant ideological disagreements with both members of the Pact for Democracy alliance. It was clear that without MIR's support, Sánchez de Lozada could not be president. Together, the MNR and MIR held 90 seats in parliament—enough to surpass the required 79 votes (50%+1 of 157 seats). Other than another MNR-ADN alliance, there was no other possible combination that would return the MNR to the presidency.<sup>179</sup> Similarly, this meant that ADN would have to seek support from outside the center-right, if Banzer was to be chosen president. Banzer, likewise, could not be elected president without support from MIR. Finally, Paz Zamora could also not expect to be elected president without support from at least one of the two front-runners. But because these refused to cooperate, and since any coalition had to pass through MIR, Paz Zamora pressed his presidential campaign into parliament.

Paz Zamora's persistence paid off, and his party finally reached an agreement with ADN—partly facilitated by Condepa—that gave the presidency to MIR. In a surprise move, Banzer publicly announced on 2 August that he was withdrawing his name as a presidential candidate and was instructing his party to vote for the MIR candidate. The alliance, however, did not come without cost. An alliance between MIR and ADN would have been thought unlikely for several historical and ideological reasons. Paz Zamora had founded MIR in 1971 as a clandestine political party to fight against the Banzer regime, which had led to his exile in 1972.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, in an act that has since been described by many Bolivians as

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<sup>179</sup> Even if IU or Condepa had given their support to Sánchez de Lozada, which was unthinkable in 1989, such an alliance would have fallen nine votes short of a necessary majority.

<sup>180</sup> Several MIR activists had been killed during the repressive military regimes of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Paz Zamora himself barely survived an assassination attempt that left his face permanently disfigured by burns.

“crossing rivers of blood” (Ardaya and Verdesoto 1994), Paz Zamora signed an agreement known as the Patriotic Accord (AP) with Hugo Banzer.

The cost of the ADN-MIR pact was more than emotional; it was also ideological and institutional.<sup>181</sup> First, though Paz Zamora was named president, his vice presidential candidate was not elected. Instead, the ADN-PDC vice presidential candidate, Ossio Sanjinés (PDC) was chosen to serve as vice president. Secondly, unlike the Pact for Democracy, the new AP government was an indisputable two-party “co-government.” In exchange for the presidency and a parliamentary majority, Paz Zamora agreed to form a bipartisan para-constitutional council, the Consejo Político Superior. The council was presided over by Banzer and was composed of another eight members, four from each party. The council would “set the general government economic, political, and social policy” (CEDIB 1989, p. 48-50). Additionally, ADN was awarded one half of the cabinet ministries, including three of the four “coordinating” super-ministries. Finally, within days of assuming the presidential office, Paz Zamora announced that his government would continue the neoliberal economic policies of the Paz Estenssoro government, including *DS 21060*.

While Condepa had facilitated the AP alliance by voting for Paz Zamora in parliament, it did not formally join the government, though it was awarded several legislative committee appointments. Sánchez de Lozada, still the party chief, also continued to direct the MNR’s legislative behavior. Thus, while the AP government frequently faced significant

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<sup>181</sup> Ironically, the 1989-1993 Paz Zamora AP government was in part marked for its heavy-handed crackdown on leftist guerrilla movements similar in orientation to ones Paz Zamora had himself supported in the 1970s. The “emotional” costs for Paz Zamora and MIR included open hostility by former fellow travelers of the socialist left. Several clandestine guerrilla movements briefly emerged, including the Ejército Guerrillero Tupac Katari (EGTK) and the Comando Néstor Paz (CNPZ). The latter was named after Paz Zamora’s brother, who had died leading a similar socialist guerrilla movement in 1970.

legislative opposition, it could often count on MNR support for programs that continued in line with the earlier neoliberal reforms. This left only the ten deputies of IU as a consistent opposition force to challenge the Paz Zamora government.

Table 5.4  
Government and opposition parliamentary strength, 1989

	Deputies	Senate	Total
Government parties	71	16	87
<i>MIR</i>	33	8	41
<i>ADN</i>	38	8	46
Opposition parties	59	11	70
<i>MNR</i>	40	9	49
<i>Condepa</i>	9	2	11
<i>IU</i>	10		10

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

By the time Paz Zamora left the presidency in 1993, MIR was indistinguishable from the other neoliberal parties. While the party retained its center-left rhetoric, the 1989-1993 AP experience tied the two parties together in the minds of many voters. In 1993, the two parties would campaign together (as AP) behind Banzer's fifth presidential run. The party would also again form the core of a multiparty coalition government when Banzer was finally elected in 1997. The 1989 election and subsequent government cemented the reputation of the three largest parties—MNR, ADN, MIR—as “systemic” parties that represented a neoliberal political program radically different from the state-corporatism of earlier decades. Similarly, the formation and conduct of the AP government suggested that Bolivian policy was significantly restricted to a neoliberal political space. Finally, the experience of Condepa also demonstrated that, while there was growing discontentment against the post-1985 neoliberal policies, this was geographically concentrated among

recently urbanized *cholos* (particularly to La Paz-El Alto) and was prone to manifest itself not in support of ideological left-socialist political options, but rather towards anti-political, populist social movements.

### **The 1993 Election**

Unlike in the 1985 and 1989 elections, a parliamentary election was not formally contested in 1993 after Banzer conceded his defeat and acknowledged the MNR's wide plurality victory. As in both previous elections, 1993 produced a multiparty coalition government—this time including the MNR, MRTKL, MBL, and (sometimes) UCS—which further consolidated the neoliberal reforms initiated during the first MNR-led government. The 1993 transfer of power also marked the first complete transfer from government to opposition. While the 1989 transfer had involved one government party (ADN) remaining in power, the 1993 transfer sent all government coalition parties (ADN and MIR) into the opposition. The election thus met Samuel Huntington's (1991) "two turnover" test.

### **Parties and Candidates**

A total of fourteen parties participated in the 1993 general election, four more than in 1989, despite a merger of two of the three largest parties (ADN and MIR ran as a single party, AP). As in 1985 and 1989, the list of parties and candidates continued to demonstrate a shift towards the political center. Of the twelve non-systemic parties, only two belonged to the socialist-left. Of the rest, three belonged to the center-left, two were *kataristas*, one (ARBOL, Alianza Renovadora Boliviana) represented the Christian Evangelical right, and two were populist movements. 1993 also saw the political debut of the neopopulist UCS, which (like Condepa) became an important force in Bolivian politics. The rest included a



slate of apolitical “independents” (ONI, Organización Nacional de Independientes)<sup>182</sup> and the right-wing FSB.

Sánchez de Lozada was again the MNR presidential candidate. By this time, the party had moved squarely into the political center with a pluralist-multicultural platform and an alliance with one of the most established *katarista* parties. The campaign also named Víctor Hugo Cárdenas (MRTKL) as its vice presidential candidate. The MNR-MRTKL victory would go on to make Cárdenas the country’s first indigenous vice president. As in 1989, the Sánchez de Lozada campaign promoted a combination of neoliberal economic reforms (including privatization of state-owned industries), but this time more heavily stressed its social policy, which included bilingual education, political decentralization, and agrarian reform. The campaign also gained considerable traction from having not participated in the unpopular AP government, which was embroiled in a series of corruption scandals. As in 1989, the MNR entered the election from a position of considerable strength and confident of victory.

Faithful to its 1989 coalition agreement, MIR joined ADN in a single electoral list headed by Banzer. By now ADN had moved squarely into the center-right, retaining its alliance with the Christian Democrats. The AP campaign was an interesting patchwork of center-right and center-left candidates. The AP vice presidential candidate was Oscar Zamora Medinaceli, leader of the Tarija-based FRI.<sup>183</sup> As in 1989, the AP campaign focused on Banzer’s personality, presenting him as a cornerstone of the democratic process and a

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<sup>182</sup> Bolivian electoral law does not allow for candidates to run as independents; they must register as members of a recognized party or front.

<sup>183</sup> Zamora Medinaceli had also been elected a senator from Tarija in 1985, when FRI had been allied with the MNR.

figure that could bring different political perspectives together into a democratic *concertación*. Nevertheless, the AP alliance face serious problems. The first, was the unpopularity of the 1989-1993 government, which led many voters (particularly those on the left) to seek other alternatives.

On the left, the alternatives included Antonio Aranibar, who was again running for president. This time, however, he led MBL in its independent political debut. The small party had broken with the more Trotskyite and syndicalist IU members and adopted a decidedly center-left position, in many ways mirroring the move made by MIR in 1985 when it left the UDP. The break between MBL and its former IU allies shifted what remained of the socialist alliance (now dominated by the Communists) further to the left. The new ASD (Alternativa Socialista Democrática) list was simply a renamed PS-1, again headed by Jerjes Justiano, which was now slightly to the right of IU.<sup>184</sup> Also situated in the center-left, was the small MFD (Movimiento Federalista Democrático) led by Carlos Valverde, who had left FRI due to the party's participation in the Banzer-led AP. It also included Carlos Serrate Reich's MNRV (now called VR-9, Vanguarda Revolucionaria 9 de Abril), which had broken with MIR for similar reasons.

The *katarista* movement not aligned with MRTKL adopted a decidedly more radical position. While the inclusion of Cárdenas as the MNR-MRTKL vice presidential nominee helped the MNR win back rural votes, many of the core centers of the *katarista* movement (such as Achacachi and Ayo Ayo) rejected the pluralist position and instead embraced the more ethno-separatist positions presented by Eje (Eje de Convergencia Patriótico) and

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<sup>184</sup> I place PS-1 and ASD slightly to the right of IU because it espouses a more moderate Eurosocialist position, in comparison to the more militant Leninist, Maoist, Trotskyite, and syndicalist factions that made up IU.

MKN (Movimiento Katarista Nacional). The move is significant, because Eje would by 2002 become MIP (Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti), led by Felipe Quispe.<sup>185</sup>

The turn toward apolitical populist social movements as vehicles for popular discontentment continued in 1993. Alongside Condepa, UCS (Unidad Cívica de Solidaridad) emerged as a powerful political force. UCS was founded Max Fernández, owner of the country's largest brewery. Unlike Condepa, however, UCS successfully gained support across a broader electorate, particularly in the working-class immigrant districts of the city of Santa Cruz.<sup>186</sup> In part, this success can be attributed to the differences in rhetoric by their leaders. Because Palenque appealed himself principally to the new "urban Aymara" residents of El Alto, he attracted support primarily from recent immigrants who still principally self-identified themselves as Aymara. In contrast, Max Fernández was a Quechua-speaking entrepreneur who self-identified himself as a *mestizo*, which broadened his electoral appeal. Also, unlike Condepa, UCS is more clearly a right-populist party, which places it slightly to the right of ADN.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Though Eje presented an Aymaran millenarian-nationalist orientation, its central membership was originally made up of middle-class Maoist intellectuals. Eje also acted as the political wing of EGTK (Ejército Guerrillero Túpac Katari), a guerrilla faction briefly active during the early 1990s, which included Felipe Quispe and Alvaro García Linera.

<sup>186</sup> I use "immigrants" here to mean internal immigrants, that is, Bolivian citizens who moved from the rural Andean countryside to the lowland city of Santa Cruz. Socio-economically, they resemble the recent immigrants to El Alto. Culturally, however, they are different. The immigrants to Santa Cruz include both Aymara and Quechua speakers (as was Max Fernández), and in contrast to recent immigrants to El Alto, those who migrate to Santa Cruz tend towards a *mestizo* orientation.

<sup>187</sup> Populist parties are difficult to categorize because they lack a clearly defined ideology. But the inclusion of many former García Mesa supporters in the party's rank, as well as its leader's previous affiliation with the fascist Falange, supports categorizing it on the right.

## The Electoral Campaign

By the 1993 general election, democratic electoral politics was an established norm. There were no significant calls for voters to boycott or cast blank votes, though there were again complaints regarding voter registration fraud. Most expected the election to produce a coalition government. This time, media pundits speculated that any kind of post-electoral coalition was possible. Carlos Toranzo (ILDIS director) was among the first to speculate in January that the election was likely to conform into two blocs—one comprising AP and UCS, the other comprising MNR, MBL, and Condepa (*La Prensa* 1993d). As in 1989, few expected the socialist left to play much of a role in any post-electoral government formation process. The campaign also focused heavily on two issues that damaged the incumbent government: Banzer's history as a former dictator and government corruption scandals. By early 1993, several alleged ties between several AP government members (especially high ranking members of MIR) and drug traffickers, known as the *narcovínculos* scandal. Finally, the 1993 electoral campaign was also marked by citizen demands for institutional reforms that would strengthen the connection between parties and voters, particularly in terms of regional representation.<sup>188</sup>

One of the key issues of the campaign was corruption. The issue was the particular campaign mantra for MBL, which described itself as the *trigo limpio* ("clean wheat sheath"). Much of their anti-corruption attacks, however, focused exclusively on MIR, denouncing their former comrades as the key instruments of government corruption. Other parties that

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<sup>188</sup> During the earliest part of the campaign, as parties issued their candidate lists, several regional organizations criticized the parties for nominating candidates that were unknown in the regions or who had not represented their local constituents in the past; they demanded greater accountability by the parties in terms of local, regional representation. Later, similar concerns were raised by Roberto Laserna (director of CERES), who argued for separate legislative elections (see Laserna in *La Prensa*, 14 May 1993).

made government corruption a key issue of their campaign included the MNR and Condepa (which described itself as a movement for a “moral revolution”).

Though the electoral campaign often descended into negative attacks between the two main candidates (Banzer and Sánchez de Lozada), both campaigns also increasingly focused on their respective platforms. By the end of April, both parties had presented a formal “government plan” published in newspapers across the country. The Bánzer campaign’s *Primero los Bolivianos* (“Bolivians first”) was presented 22 March as a lengthy personal “message from General Hugo Banzer” in which he used nationalist appeals to his “compatriots” and promised to expand economic growth, direct foreign investment, and national infrastructure development. The MNR-MRTKL 56-page *Plan de Todos* (1993) appeared on 4 April, followed with a two-page newspaper spread the next day. In it, the Sánchez de Lozada campaign made clear that it would continue the neoliberal policies established since 1985—particularly with a call to “capitalize and democratize” the state-owned enterprises—but also promised to expand the state’s welfare capacities. The two parties accused each other of copycatting their platforms. The MNR’s chief campaign strategist, Juan Carlos Duran, criticized the Banzer platform saying it “smelled like a copy” of the MNR’s 1985 platform and that it was “an old plan, not a plan for change” (*Ultima Hora* 1993b). Jorge Landívar Roca (ADN) responded with claims that the MNR was clearly “nervous and desperate” because of the “transparency and accomplishments” of the AP government—before appealing for his opponents to stop their insulting attacks, which have “no place in a democratic process” (*El Diario* 1993). Hermán Antelo (MNR) also defended the then-upcoming MNR plan as original, and not a copy of the “plan Banzer” released earlier (*Ultima Hora* 1993a).

Such accusations between the Banzer and Sánchez de Lozada campaigns about “copycat” plans played into the left’s accusations that the two platforms were essentially similar, presenting voters with a “false choice”—since it was clear that both plans were essentially similar. The MBL’s *“Para recuperar la esperanza”* (“To recover hope”) was published in newspapers across the country on 11 April (*La Razón* 1993c). Though other parties distributed pamphlets, these were primarily limited to critiques of the “current situation” combined with vague slogans or phrases meant to describe their candidate’s goals. In contrast, the MBL plan began with a brief critique of the two previous governments and the parties that represented them, before launching into a platform that aimed to “reform the current neoliberal recipes” through policies to encourage production, particularly small- and medium-scale production. Interestingly, the MBL plan did not once mention *DS 21060*. Key elements of the MBL plan focused on expanding the state’s welfare responsibilities and eliminating government corruption, placing their platform in the center-left (by accepting the general framework of market economic reforms but calling for greater attention to social welfare issues).

MBL’s campaign strategy also differed from the campaigns from the rest of the left. ASD’s vice presidential candidate criticized “neoliberal parties” for seeking constitutional reforms that would consolidate the post-1985 structural reforms; he argued that the “conquests of 1952” and the statist economic model it produced—particularly, state ownership of natural resources—were “unrenounceable values that must be preserved” (*La Prensa* 1993c). Several attacks against the two chief candidates came from within their own previous supporters. Several dissident Christian democrats accused PDC of betraying its principles by “pledging allegiance and fidelity to neoliberal fundamentalism” (*Ultima Hora* 1993c). Several ex-MNR factions also publicly abandoned the Sánchez de Lozada campaign.

These included Carlos Serrate Reich (MNRV), who produced a list of former prominent members of the MNR old guard that had either left or been expelled from the party. Serrate Reich claimed that he would rejoin the party only when “it recovers the flags of 9 April” (*Ultima Hora* 1993c).

In contrast, MBL candidates focused their attacks on Banzer and MIR. On 6 March, the party’s presidential candidate (Antonio Aranibar) even defended the MNR from its association with Banzer’s dictatorship, attacked Paz Zamora’s “amnesia,” and claimed it was a “shame the president doesn’t remember those times”—a clear jab at Paz Zamora’s alliance with a dictator he had opposed in the 1970s (*Presencia* 1993b).<sup>189</sup> The statement followed a series of fresh attacks on Banzer’s dictatorial past from various sectors. The issue revolved around possible legal charges against Banzer for his role in the death of the leftist military dictator, General Juan José Torres (Paz Zamora had served as a sub-cabinet minister under Torres). Several legislators made strong statements condemning Banzer. Ernesto Machicao (MNR) argued that “an ex-dictator like Banzer has no rights in a democracy because he is part of the Pinochet, Galtieri, Somoza club.” IU’s Germán Gutiérrez stated that Banzer was “demonstrating his military education.” And MBL’s Miguel Urioste argued that “the country cannot forget that regime nor tolerate that dictators become democrats” (*La Razón* 1993f). All the while Banzer routinely defended himself as a pillar of the new democratic system, one who had twice willingly surrendered the presidency.

The exchange became quite spiteful. ADN’s Tito Hoz de Vila claimed it was “immoral” for the MNR to attack the former dictator after relying on him during the 1985-

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<sup>189</sup> The defense came from Aranibar insisting that the MNR and FSB had ended their participation in the Banzer regime in 1974, two years before Torres’ assassination. Splitting hairs in such a public defense of the MNR suggests the party was positioning itself for a potential post-electoral alliance.

1989 coalition government; he also attacked “politicians who conspired alongside Banzer but now have the cynicism to turn on him” and railed against the “traditional *movimientista* practice that continues to poison Bolivian politics”—clearly alluding to the MNR’s factional and conspiratorial in-fighting of the 1960s (*La Razón* 1993e). In response, the MNR’s Guillermo Richter called Hoz de Vila an “uncultured *llockalla*” who forgot that where it not for the National Revolution, “rural families like his would never have been able to enter politics” (*Hoy* 1993).<sup>190</sup>

Another feature of the electoral mud slinging was the bitter clash between Condepa and UCS. The attacks began from Palenque’s on-air accusations that Max Fernández had profited from narco-trafficking, and that he had used “violence and illegal resources” in establishing UCS (*La Razón* 1993d). In response, Max Fernández began a civil suit against Palenque for defamation of character. Both parties denied initiating their mutual “dirty war”—though the two maintained a bitter feud for the remainder of the campaign.

The 1993 electoral campaign was also marked by more extensive use of formalized presidential debates, though these again reinforced the dominant position of the largest parties. The debates were broken down into four separate events held during the last week of the campaign. In none of the debates would all candidates face each other; the three main candidates to face off during the last one. Originally, the final debate slated Sánchez de Lozada, Banzer, and Palenque. On 31 May, however, the hosting Press Association of La Paz changed the last debate to replace Palenque with Max Fernández. In protest, Palenque decided to not participate in any debates. The first debate included the candidates from ONI, MNRV, ARBOL, and MFD. In that debate, only Carlos Serrate Reich (MNRV)

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<sup>190</sup> Though *llockalla* literally means “a young boy” in Aymara, it can also be used as a pejorative slur (as Richter clearly intended it to be).



attacked neoliberalism as a “failure,” while the other candidates defended the free market (*Presencia* 1993a).<sup>191</sup> The second debate involved more anti-neoliberal critics—ASD, FSB, Eje Pachakuti, and MKN—though these, too, focused greater attention to their own internal disagreements and admitted that their main goal was simply to win at least one seat in parliament. Highlights include Justiniano’s (ASD) attack on MBL as a “false revolutionary movement” that would simply become “the MNR’s caboose” and Untoja’s (MKN) attack on Víctor Hugo Cárdenas for his alliance with the “gringo Goni” (*Opinión* 1993). The debate between Aranibar (MBL) and Velasco (IU) centered on the two parties’ recent split, though both agreed that neither would form a coalition with Banzer. Finally, the debate featuring the MNR, AP, and UCS candidates was remarkably tame. In the last two weeks of the campaign, Banzer and Sánchez de Lozada had refrained from the kind of personal attacks that characterized the earlier part of the campaign period; both publicly agreed that they did not have ideological differences and that their difference was in administration styles.

## **Electoral Results**

The 6 June 1993 general election was a resounding defeat for the incumbent AP alliance and a clear plurality victory for the MNR, its second consecutive plurality victory under Sánchez de Lozada. Banzer received fewer votes than either he or Paz Zamora had in 1989 and their AP alliance received fewer than half the combined ADN and MIR votes in that election. In contrast, Sánchez de Lozada increased his vote share by more than ten points from 1989. Nevertheless, 1993 also saw the first marked decline in aggregate vote for

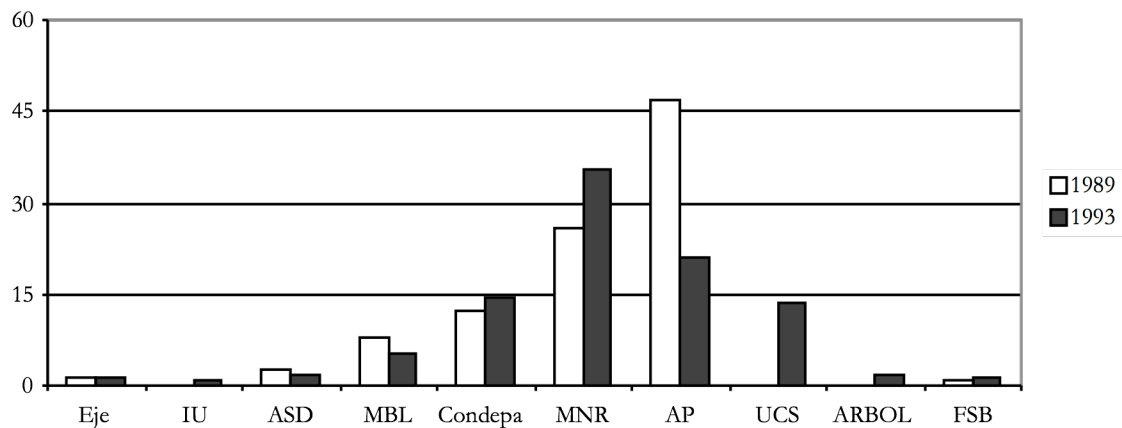
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<sup>191</sup> ONI’s Bonifaz argued for a pure free market that included legalized cocaine. MFD’s Valverde advocated federalizing the country to promote strong, local free markets. ARBOL’s Ancalle backed suspending taxes on “productive industries” to spur economic growth.

the three systemic parties, which together captured barely half of the total valid vote. This decline in support for the systemic parties did not, however, translate into increased support for leftist alternatives; left-socialist parties continued their decline. The parties that gained disaffected voters were the neopopulist parties: Condepa and UCS. 1993 also marked a continued dilution of voters across the multiparty system as the effective number of electoral parties dropped only slightly (to 4.7). Finally, voter turnout in 1993 remained relatively steady relative to 1989, though the number of blank and null votes declined markedly (to 2.14% and 2.69%, respectively).

Figure 5.5

Change in support for parties between 1989 and 1993, as percent of valid vote



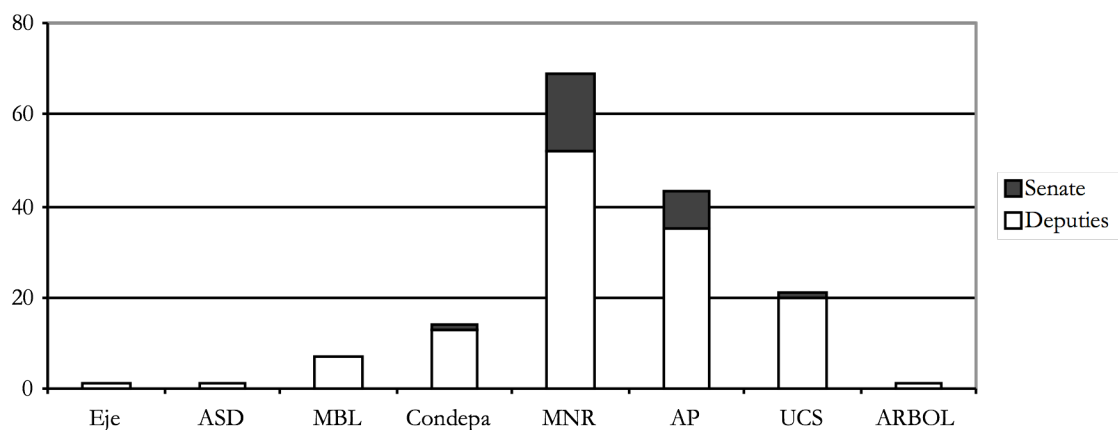
Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. AP 1989 reflects ADN-MIR. MBL 1989 reflects IU. ASD 1989 reflects PS-1. Eje-Pachakuti 1989 reflects FULKA.

Sánchez de Lozada's 1993 plurality victory would be the highest vote share any presidential candidate would receive until 2005 and remains the second-highest vote share for any presidential candidate in the post-transition period. The MNR's 1993 plurality victory also extended into nearly every corner of the country. The party placed first in eight of nine

departments; the only exception was Pando, an ADN stronghold, where the MNR placed second. Perhaps the biggest coup was winning in La Paz (where it had placed third in 1989), edging out Condepa by 4,642 votes. The MNR also received the largest number of seats for any party in a single election, with 52 deputies and 17 senators, leaving it only ten votes shy of a parliamentary majority. In contrast, Banzer's AP alliance placed a distant second in all but eight departments: La Paz and Oruro. In La Paz, Condepa roughly retained its 1989 vote share. Oruro voters strongly supported Max Fernández, the national beer magnate and UCS founder, who was born in the department.

Figure 5.6

Legislative seats by party, 1993



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

Though the number of parties that won seats increased to eight, the effective number of legislative parties also decreased slightly (to 3.7). This was in large measure due to the fact that three of the parties won only one seat each and, while one single party (MNR) won nearly a majority of all seats. The increase in the number of parties that won seats was

partly a function of the new Sainte-Laguë electoral formula, which had replaced the previous system of double quotients, as well as the heavy concentration of minor party voters in particular departments. Nevertheless, aggregate disproportionality increased slightly to 0.064, and differences within departments were again mixed.

The election results clearly showed discontentment with the incumbent AP. Yet the results also showed that many voters still generally supported the neoliberal reforms initiated by the first MNR-led government in 1985. Though the inclusion of Cárdenas on the ticket and the alliance with MRTKL clearly helped boost votes for the MNR. Still, Sánchez de Lozada was still most directly identified as the architect of the NEP and *DS 21060* and his campaign vigorously defended the neoliberal structural reforms, promising more of the same. Moreover, the large vote shares for populist parties like Condepa and UCS demonstrated that street-level discontent with the reforms had not yet organized into a coherent alternative policy platform. A decade after the beginning of neoliberal structural reforms the ideological left (in aggregate) had declined to less than ten percent of the valid popular vote and the indigenous vote was still limited to less than two percent.

Looking across departments, the 1993 election again saw the systemic parties dominate most of the country (see Table 4.5). Only in La Paz (driven, again, by El Alto voters) and Oruro did other parties win senate seats. Again, the three systemic parties hegemonized the *media luna*, where they averaged at least two thirds of all votes (as high as 83.81% in Pando). Where the three parties fared least well was in the Andean departments, particularly the rural Altiplano. As in previous elections, the continued decline for electoral support for the systemic parties was primarily a function of their sharp decline in support across the rural Altiplano. This pattern is also evident in the distribution of minor parties. The left won only two seats in the *media luna*, both of them in Santa Cruz—a function of the

department's large district magnitude (17 lower house seats) and the highly proportional Sainte-Laguë electoral formula. The 1993 election also saw Condepa win a single seat (also in Santa Cruz) in the *media luna*—its first and only seat in those departments in any election. La Paz was the department that least supported the three systemic parties, with only 45.18% of the valid vote and half of the department's lower house seats. But while support for the three largest parties declined across Andean Bolivia, no party had yet emerged to challenge their hegemony. By 1993, party systems in Andean departments were more fragmented than in *media luna* departments.

Table 5.5

Percent of valid vote for lead 1993 presidential candidates, by department

	Sánchez de Lozada (MNR)	Hugo Banzer (AP)	Carlos Palenque (Condepa)	Max Fernández (UCS)
La Paz	<b>31.33</b>	13.85	30.58	10.52
Cochabamba	<b>40.45</b>	21.05	3.73	18.75
Oruro	<b>33.26</b>	18.24	11.71	20.31
Potosí	<b>30.65</b>	22.58	6.29	19.48
Chuquisaca	<b>31.95</b>	26.23	2.52	12.67
Tarija	<b>42.34</b>	30.29	1.76	13.79
Santa Cruz	<b>40.52</b>	26.98	4.35	13.01
Beni	<b>41.40</b>	36.93	1.25	11.52
Pando	33.09	<b>50.72</b>	0.43	6.96
National	35.55	21.05	14.29	13.77

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral; department winners in bold.

## Government Formation

As in the two previous elections, no candidate won an absolute majority. But this time the margin of victory was sufficient enough that, only four days after election day, Banzer formally conceded defeat. His supporters described the move as further evidence that the ex-dictator was a crucial player in Bolivia's new democracy, particularly for his role

in facilitating the formation of three consecutive governments. In his concession speech, he claimed that he was stepping down so that small parties “wouldn’t go fishing in turbulent waters” (*El Mundo* 1993).<sup>192</sup> The move left Sánchez de Lozada free to pursue different coalition partners from a position of strength. His own party’s central executive committee voted to give the president-elect full discretion in such negotiations. He also had nearly two full months to assemble a parliamentary government. Yet from the start, it was clear that the MNR would pursue an alliance with MBL and one other partner, either Condepa or UCS.

Negotiations between MNR and MBL, headed by Juan Carlos Durán (MNR) and Miguel Urioste (MBL), began almost immediately. From the pre-electoral campaign, it was clear that the two parties now shared many similar positions (the MNR had moved squarely into the political center even as MBL had moved into the center-left) particularly in terms of expanding the state’s social safety net. Where the two parties most sharply disagreed was in the issue of constitutional reform. The MNR had voted alongside AP and Condepa for a constitutional reform project that would make future constitutional amendments easier. The small party held a national congress of its members in mid-June to discuss the possibility of joining the government. It was clear from several MBL leaders that their party would only join an MNR-led government if coincided on policy issues. By 23 June, the MBL had formally submitted a proposal that would provide “unconditional” support for an MNR government, so long as it agreed to the MBL’s policy agenda (*Los Tiempos* 1993a).

Negotiations between the MNR and Condepa, in contrast, soon hit a snag. During preliminary discussions, Palenque insisted on at least one cabinet position (the Ministry of Energy), several regional development corporations (particularly CORDEPAZ), and various

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<sup>192</sup> The move blocked any hope that the third-place Palenque could, like Paz Zamora, emerge as president. It also (briefly) opened the possibility of another MNR-ADN co-government.

other positions (*La Prensa* 1993a). All the while, Guillermo Bedregal (MNR party sub-chief) continued to also negotiate with Max Fernández, though the UCS leader's ambivalence suggested a deal was more likely with Condepa. As negotiations continued, Palenque threatened that he would not entertain any alliance with the new Sánchez de Lozada government if it continued negotiations with UCS. The move put a strain on both independent bilateral negotiations, though by 30 June anonymous UCS sources claimed that their party had reached an agreement with the MNR (*La Razón* 1993b).

Table 5.6

Government and opposition parliamentary strength, 1993

	Deputies	Senate	Total
Government parties	79	18	97
<i>MNR-MRTKL</i>	52	17	69
<i>MBL</i>	7		
<i>UCS</i>	20	1	21
Opposition parties	51	9	60
<i>AP</i>	35	8	43
<i>Condepa</i>	13	1	14
<i>ASD</i>	1		1
<i>ARBOL</i>	1		1
<i>Eje-Pachakuti</i>	1		1

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

By the first week of July, nearly a month before his inauguration, Sánchez de Lozada had signed separate formal agreements with both MBL and UCS. The MNR-MBL "Pact for Change" rested principally on policy agreements, particularly on the fight against corruption and a range of social policy issues. MBL would play a major role in the first Sánchez de

Lozada administration, with its members holding several key positions.<sup>193</sup> Its members (and other center-left intellectuals) would also play a major role in structuring the government's education and land reforms—and especially the *Participación Popular* reforms. The separate MNR-UCS “Pact for Governability” gave UCS the same share of representation within the executive branch as MBL, even though UCS had three times more seats in parliament. The MNR-UCS pact also included a para-constitutional organ (similar to the AP council) led personally by Sánchez de Lozada. In contrast, the MNR-MBL pact included no such provision but relied instead on convergence around similar social policy agendas.

Differences in power-sharing quotas created tension within the governing coalition even before the new government was inaugurated. Throughout mid-July, Max Fernández threatened to abandon the governing coalition. In part, he was bitter that MBL (which included several prominent lawyers) had previously threatened to investigate the beer magnate's finances.<sup>194</sup> Such friction would frequently erupt within the coalition.

By the time Sánchez de Lozada left the presidency in 1997, it seemed Bolivian democracy and its liberal-pluralist political system was consolidated. While Sánchez de Lozada had privatized the country's state-owned industries, he had used the profits to establish the country's first universal pension program (the BONOSOL). The 1993-1997 government had also overseen a series of liberal-pluralist reforms: The constitution was

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<sup>193</sup> MBL's government participation was disproportionate to its seven deputies. Antonio Aranibar was made Chancellor (Bolivian Foreign Minister); Juan Del Granado was elected Senate president (third in line of succession) and head of parliament's human rights commission; Edgar Camacho was named ambassador to the OAS; Alfonso Ferrufino was elected parliament secretary; Félix Barrios was named president of the development corporation of Chuquisaca (CORDECH).

<sup>194</sup> Though it was clear that Max Fernández was bitter about the coalition's power-sharing arrangement, he routinely insisted that he did not need political power because he was “already a wealthy man.” As with his feud with Condepa, he threatened civil suits against MBL leaders for defamation of character. See *La Razón* 1993a.



amended, formally declaring Bolivia a “pluricultural, multiethnic” nation. The electoral system was dramatically changed from a simple list-PR system to a mixed-member proportional system modeled on the German system. The government had also initiated sweeping educational and agrarian reforms and a decentralization reform that brought meaningful municipal elections—and local government control—to the rural countryside.

The 1993 election also cemented the role of the three major parties as the most likely nuclei for any governing coalition. The election also demonstrated a marked shift towards the political center; the only successful party on the left was MBL, while socialist-left alternatives continued to decline. Nevertheless, the 1993 election also made clear that new populist parties now played a significant role in the political process. Similarly, though the systemic parties were in a dominant position, their dominance rested on their continued support in the *media luna*. In other areas, particularly the rural Altiplano and the city of El Alto, voters continued to turn away from the major parties towards other electoral alternatives. Thus, while the system was, on the surface, stable, discontent was both growing and regionally concentrated.

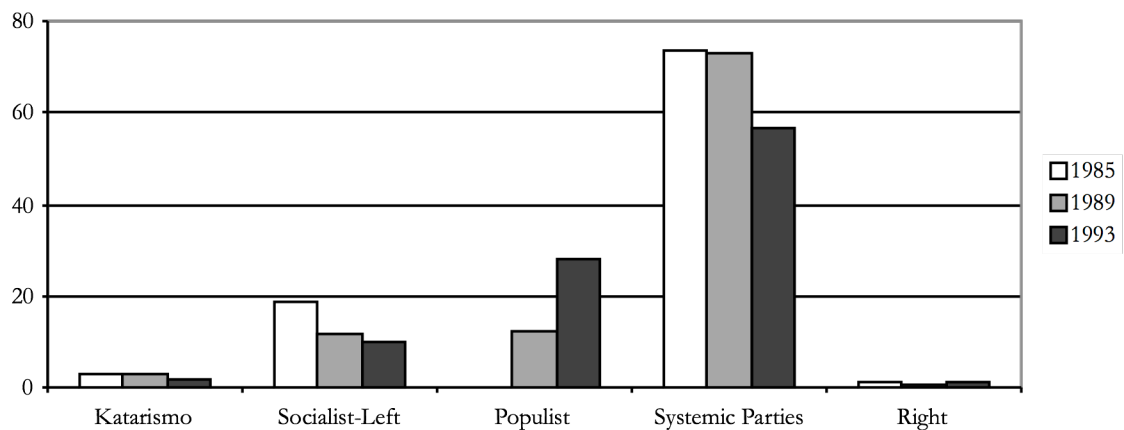
### **An Overview of the First Institutional Period**

The 1985, 1989, and 1993 elections saw the institutionalization of “parliamentarized presidentialism”—a system based on moderated multiparty competition between three key “systemic” parties. During this period, votes remained heavily concentrated around three parties (MNR, ADN, MIR) that formed the nucleus of any government coalition. On the other hand, this period also saw the growth—as in other Latin American countries—of populist and neopopulist movements that challenged the political status quo. Unlike in other cases (Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela) these parties were accommodating themselves into the

existing party system. Rather than calling for an overthrow of the existing electoral framework, UCS and Condepa instead sought to be included into the evolving system of parliamentary representation and coalition government formation.

Figure 5.7

Support for different political tendencies 1985-1993, as percent of valid vote



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

Nevertheless, the decisive shift away from the systemic parties in the department of La Paz suggested a worrisome trend. A significant—and geographically concentrated—part of the national electorate was clearly politically disaffected. The urban poor voters of El Alto and the *tembladeras* of La Paz were consistently voting against systemic parties; this meant that this portion of the electorate was consistently unrepresented by incoming governments. Yet so long as voters in other departments continued to vote for systemic parties (or other parties that generally supported the status quo), these voters concentrated in La Paz were unable to shift the country's political direction. Instead, the (mostly *cholo*) urban poor in the capital metropolitan area were a constant, disaffected, and excluded political minority.

Still, this period showed a remarkable dominance by systemic parties (see Figure 5.7). Despite their marked decline in 1993, the three systemic parties continued to capture the lion's share of the national vote. The ideological left, indigenous parties, and the far right, in contrast, remained on a steady decline. The only parties that gained considerable support during this period were the two populist parties (Condepa and UCS), though these frequently supported the systemic parties in establishing governing coalitions. By 1997, both Condepa and UCS would join government coalitions with systemic, neoliberal parties. Thus, the 1985-1997 period showed a remarkable political stability uncommon in other countries in the region (Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela).

### **Explaining Elite Consensus**

This first period also marked a shift away from the post-1952 state-corporatist discourse and towards a new liberal-pluralist one—at least among members of the political class. The Paz Estenssoro presidency marked the beginning of this dramatic shift in public elite political discourse. Though the 1985 campaign was still framed in much of the same national-revolutionary discourse of the 1952 Revolution, the NEP structural reforms did more than simply change the relationship between the state and economic society. The dismantling of the state-corporatist model signaled a turn away from many of the core ideological principles of the 1952 National Revolution. Even the party—and key figures within the party—most connected with the 1952 revolution turned away its earlier state-corporatist discourse and began to embrace a new liberal-pluralist discourse. In short, the 1985-1989 government served as the foundation for a new kind of (democratic) competitive politics markedly different from the kind of politics pursued before. After 1985, none of the systemic parties pretended to build a hegemonic national political presence that represented

“the nation.” Instead, they presented themselves as representing coalitions of different sectoral or ideological interests engaged in liberal-pluralist democratic competition. This became increasingly evident after the 1989 election.

The emergence of this new political discourse cannot be easily explained. In part, the euphoria of the early years of the “third wave” of democracy may have contributed to an international liberal zeitgeist (Huntington 1991; Fukuyama 1993). Certainly, international pressure from the OECD countries in favor of neoliberal economic reforms was a prevalent feature 1980s international policy. Alongside neoliberalism, international donor agencies and nongovernmental organizations also encouraged a new emphasis on pluralist politics (emphasizing attention to the country’s cultural differences and “multinationality”), rather than the “integrationist” nationalism of the 1930s-1960s (which attempted to construct a homogenous national identity). Certainly, the discourse shift among members of the established political elite was consistent with international trends. But such an explanation cannot account for the ease with which Bolivian elites transitioned into a small discursive space relative to its neighbors. There may have been an international zeitgeist that favored liberal-pluralism, but it was facilitated in Bolivia by the institutions of parliamentarised presidentialism, which made cooperative inter-elite behavior less costly.

It matters little whether elite consensus reflected genuine attitudinal transformation or merely a product of institutions that facilitated sharing state patronage. The mutual desire for *pegas* may have been the glue that bound the elite consensus together, but this was facilitated by an institutional structure that encouraged parliamentarism. The end result was the same: the systemic political parties maneuvered to minimize the distance between each other in order to signal their willingness to participate in coalition governments. In the subsequent elections, this system would evolve into an intricate—but very public—system in

which both political elites and voters expected elections to produce multiparty coalition governments based on mutual accommodation and patronage sharing.

Another factor that facilitated the forging of an elite consensus among members of the “systemic” political elite was the emergence, beginning in the late-1980s, of a series of Foros Políticos (small conferences)—most hosted by the Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS), a social science think tank supported by Germany’s Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.<sup>195</sup> These were attended both by “independent” intellectuals and social scientists and key members of the political establishment. The conferences principally debated various institutional reform proposals. But they also served a secondary function: By bringing leaders of different political parties together in the semi-private, non-threatening environments of academic exchange, the Foros Políticos helped members of the political class develop a common consensus. Often, the common understanding developed at the conferences would make their way into common agreement—especially among the systemic parties—in favor of certain policies or reforms.

Many of the reforms initiated by Sánchez de Lozada’s government were topics of earlier Foros Políticos. The 2nd Foro Político focused on electoral system reforms, and included a presentation by ADN’s Ronald MacLean on the benefits of the German MMP electoral system (Mesa 1988). The 9th Foro Político focused on decentralization alternatives and included presentations by the MNR’s Mario Cossío (Toranzo 1993).<sup>196</sup> Additionally,

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<sup>195</sup> Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) is affiliated with German’s Social Democratic Party (SDP). There are other important Bolivian think tanks, such as the Fundación Milenio and the Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM), ILDIS is still the dominant research center and hosts the majority of such conferences.

<sup>196</sup> ILDIS organized a series of Foros on a variety of topics (the economy, social issues, regional issues, etc.). During the 1980s and 1990s, the Foros Políticos were held annually. Nearly every one of these conferences or

much of the technical team gathered to head the Secretaría de Participación Popular (SNPP) had already been meeting regularly at various conferences and workshops since the late-1980s (Molina Monasterios 1997).

By the mid-1990s, important disagreements still existed between the systemic parties. But close working, intellectual relationships between the party's key figures—facilitated by their mutual relationships with social scientists—tended to blunt such disagreements. The conferences also contributed to a common political discourse based common support for representative democratic processes. Of course, it also tended to constrain much of the political process to semi-private meetings between intellectual and political elites (both members of the same “political class”). New policy orientations were decided by a distant political that increasingly saw political life as a series of technical challenges. In the end, even if they were genuinely concerned about issues of representativeness and looking for ways to “deepen” Bolivia's democracy, they had distanced themselves from the broader public. Like stilt-walkers, they were elevated high above ordinary “street” politics. So long as all relevant political players attended the same academic conferences, the system was safe. Even more ironically, some of the reform proposals initiated during this period—and implemented in the next—made it increasingly difficult to maintain this congenial political class elevated.

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workshops produced a short, monographic publication. The standard format includes the presentation(s), followed by some selected commentary by the participants. These short publications resemble published proceedings of any academic conference. It is important to note that the presenters and commentators are just as frequently political figures (e.g. Carlos Mesa, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, Miguel Urioste, Juan Del Granado) as “professional” social scientists. Similarly, attendance at these Foros was not limited to intellectuals and party leaders who supported neoliberalism; participants included Simón Réyes, Alejo Véliz, Felipe Quispe, Alvaro García Linera, and Filemon Escobar. Likewise, many participants were both “professional” social scientists and political figures (e.g. Miguel Urioste, Alvaro García Linera).

## CHAPTER 6

### **REFORM AND DEALIGNMENT: 1993-2002**

The 1997 and 2002 general elections were markedly different from the previous three. First, these showed a steady decline in support for the three systemic parties that made up the core of the party system. This period also saw a revitalization of traditional Bolivian syndicalism, which became more actively engaged in formal politics.<sup>197</sup> Unlike the earlier populist movements, the new anti-systemic opposition parties—most notably MAS and MIP—were not easily accommodated into the political system. Where neopopulist parties like Condepa and UCS had blunted or rescinded their anti-neoliberal discourse to position themselves within the existing political system, these new parties did not. Nevertheless, both the 1997 and 2002 elections produced parliamentarized presidential coalition governments that did not stray from the neoliberal model in place since 1985. By this period, however, the growing number of parties enlisted into coalition governments was straining effective governance. By 2002, the opposition legislative bloc no longer included any systemic parties but was instead dominated by anti-systemic forces.

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<sup>197</sup> Though this period saw a growth of several different types of new social movements, here I focus on the resurgence of syndicalism as an organizational strategy. Perhaps such new movements are “neo-syndicalist” in much the same way as some describe the recent “neopopulist” movements (Weyland 2001) since they increasingly represent organized informal sector workers (e.g. coca farmers, taxi drivers, or market vendors) rather than the formal sectors (e.g. miners, teachers, or other public sector workers) traditionally represented by the COB.

These were also the first elections after a series of institutional and electoral system reforms that reshaped political competition.<sup>198</sup> Most important of these—for the purpose of national presidential-parliamentary politics—was the adoption of an MMP electoral system. Starting with the 1997 election, Bolivian voters were given two choices: In addition to their presidential vote, they were given a second vote for a “uninominal” single-seat district representative to the lower legislative chamber.<sup>199</sup> Department seat apportionments (and, subsequently, district magnitudes) also changed, giving more seats to La Paz and Santa Cruz while taking away seats from three departments (see Table 6.1). The reapportionment increased the electoral weight of the departments of the *eje central* (La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz). Despite these changes, voter turnout during this period stayed relatively stable; the continued decline noticed between 1985 and 1993 stopped, suggesting that voter turnout had bottomed out in 1997. The effective number of electoral parties was also similar across 1997 and 2002—but showed a marked increase from the previous period.

The 1997 and 2002 elections were also marked by a clear (and growing) regional polarization. Whereas the three major systemic parties had won substantial shares of the votes across all nine departments from 1985 to 1993, by 2002 substantially different regional party systems were noticeable. But despite a growing rejection of systemic parties across Andean Bolivia, until 1997 Andean voters had not yet realigned into a different stable party system. Thus, this was a period of gradual dealignment and erosion of the national party

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<sup>198</sup> For more detail on these reforms, see Chapter 4.

<sup>199</sup> The presidential vote was still used to elect about one half of the representatives to the lower house, as well as members of the Senate. For a description of Bolivia’s mixed-member electoral system, see Chapter 3. Uninominal deputies are those elected in single-member, first-past-the-post electoral districts; deputies elected by the compensatory proportional representation portion of the ballot (the presidential vote) are called “plurinominal” deputies.



system, but not yet a full-blown crisis (as in 1990 Peru or 1998 Venezuela). Though different regional voting patterns were previously discernable, by 2002 regional party systems across Andean and *media luna* departments were now dramatically different. While support for systemic parties remained high across the *media luna*, the Andean departments experienced a noticeable political dealignment. Since 1985, Andean departments had measurably higher electoral volatility and effective number of electoral parties than those in the *media luna*. Though this erosion of popular support for systemic parties and their policies was significant, the continued support for systemic parties among *media luna* departments was enough to overcome weak electoral opposition from the Andes. The result, however, was that governments were more and more elected by *media luna* voters, regardless of Andean preferences.

Table 6.1

Number of lower house seats per department

Department	1985-1993	1997-2002	Change
La Paz	28	31	+3
Cochabamba	18	18	
Oruro	10	10	
Potosí	19	15	-4
Chuquisaca	13	11	-2
Tarija	9	9	
Santa Cruz	17	22	+5
Beni	9	9	
Pando	7	5	-2
Total	130	130	

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

## Participación Popular and Its Impact

One of the reforms that greatly impacted post-1993 political life was the 1994 Ley de Participación Popular, which fundamentally altered the political landscape. Participación Popular significantly affected presidential and parliamentary elections by transforming the national and regional party systems. One of the most sweeping decentralization reforms in the Latin America, Participación Popular transferred fiscal resources and policy authority from the central state level to local, municipal governments. This was also an impressive technocratic undertaking. In just a year, a technical team (the SNPP) elaborated and delimited 311 municipal units (since expanded to 327). The move was an alternative to proposals for a federal structure that would have instead devolved authority to the nine departments.<sup>200</sup> Referenced by many protagonists as a “revolutionary” reform on par with the 1952 Revolution (Barbery Anaya 1997; R. Mayorga 1997), Participación Popular was part of a package of agrarian, economic, educational, and administrative reforms deliberately meant to “deepen” Bolivia’s democracy.

The consequences of regular, local elections on Bolivian political life were profound. After all, the 1995 municipal elections were the first local elections in Bolivian history.<sup>201</sup> From the start, party leaders and pundits viewed municipal elections (which did not coincide with national elections) as measures of popular support for incumbent governments in between general elections.<sup>202</sup> Yet it soon became apparent that municipal governments—

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<sup>200</sup> For a detailed overview of the debates leading up to Participación Popular, see Centellas 2000.

<sup>201</sup> Bolivia’s first municipal elections were technically held in 1985. But these were limited to the department capitals. The 1985 municipal elections were held in all 311 recently defined municipalities and represented the first time rural Bolivians could legally vote for any local authorities.

<sup>202</sup> Because Bolivia does not have mid-term elections, support for political parties in municipal elections are often used to measure changes in voter preferences.

perhaps even more so than the direct election of uninominal deputies—significantly altered the nature of party politics. Whereas before political aspirants had to carefully rise through the ranks of the traditional political parties, they could now begin their political careers directly through popular electoral support. Likewise, smaller parties could “go it alone” in local contests where they had strong, concentrated popular support. From there, local leaders—with electoral claims to popular legitimacy—could gain political and administrative experience. More importantly, local leaders or movements could use decentralized political and fiscal resources to propel their national political aspirations.

Several new political leaders and movements emerged from these new local political spaces. One such figure was Manfred Reyes Villa, who used his position as mayor of Cochabamba (the country’s third-largest city) to build a new political machine—Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR)—powerful enough to make him a serious presidential contender in 2002. Another was Evo Morales and MAS, which eventually controlled nearly all the municipalities in Cochabamba’s coca-producing Chapare region. Participación Popular also kept afloat many small parties, though often re-orienting them towards extreme parochialism or regionalism. The *katarista* movement (despite frequently dividing into numerous factions) was strengthened by its ability to exercise authority in several Altiplano municipalities. Similarly, the MBL was able to make grassroots alliances between local intellectuals and social movements, becoming a strong presence in many rural and medium-sized municipal governments—particularly throughout Chuquisaca and Potosí. The MBL’s success even enabled one its prominent members, Juan Del Granado, to form a new independent political party—Movimiento Sin Miedo (MSM)—that has become a dominant political force in La Paz city politics. All in all, the post-1993 period saw the continued survival of small political forces and the creation of new ones kept afloat by their access to municipal-level resources.

## The Rise of Evo Morales

The origin of today's Movimiento al Socialismo is often overlooked. Yet the rise of MAS as a political movement perhaps best exemplifies the transformative effect of Participación Popular. Despite the left's poor electoral performance since 1985, one of the centers of traditional syndicalism was found among the Chapare *cocaleros* communities. These were communities of new internal migrants—principally ex-miners from Oruro—that had recently arrived in the Chapare and opened new farm settlements.<sup>203</sup> Fairly isolated from the central government, dissatisfied with the national economic conditions that forced them to move from the mines to the Chapare, and with previous syndicalist organizational experience, these communities were fertile areas for leftist movements. The fact that these communities had gravitated towards an illicit crop—coca—for their livelihood also put them in constant conflict with central state authorities. In 1995, Alejo Véliz and other organizers (including Morales) founded the Asamblea para la Soberanía de los Pueblos (ASP) and the Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos (IPSP).<sup>204</sup> Unable to register in time for the 1995 municipal elections, ASP-IPSP adopted the banner of the nearly defunct IU.

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<sup>203</sup> Previous residents of the region, who are now a political minority, refer to members of these new communities as *colonizadores* (“colonizers”), a term the *cocaleros* often use to refer to themselves as well.

<sup>204</sup> Though both organizations were ostensibly separate, the ASP-IPSP organizational structure was dominated by ASP, which was led by Alejo Véliz. ASP was an umbrella organization that included numerous rural and indigenous social organizations, including (among others) CSUTCB, CIDOB, the Confederación Nacional de Colonizadores de Bolivia (CNCB).

Eventually, ideological and personal conflicts would divide Véliz (ASP) and Morales (IPSP) in 1998.<sup>205</sup> By then, however, Evo Morales and the *vocaleros* had successfully captured nearly all the municipal governments of the Chapare. The voting bloc that Evo Morales could deliver made him a powerful member of IU, by then comprised only of the Communists and a small splinter of the Falange: Movimiento al Socialismo Unzaguista (MAS-U).

MAS-U was founded in 1987 by David Añez Pedraza, an FSB dissident who argued that the Falange needed to “return to its principles.” The Bolivian Falange—which was a clear imitation of the Spanish Falange—was founded in 1937 by Oscar Unzaga de la Vega, who espoused the kind of “national socialism” popular throughout Latin America during the 1930s.<sup>206</sup> During the 1940s and 1950s it played an influential role in Bolivian politics, serving as the right-wing opposition to the national revolutionary MNR. Like the MNR, the Falange was openly anti-*rosca*, anti-imperialist, and anti-communist; unlike the MNR, it was more openly nationalist, corporatist, and authoritarian. The historical relationship between Bolivia’s left and right is complex and Falangists were at times able to accommodate their brand of “socialism” to that of some Trotskyite, syndicalist orientations.<sup>207</sup> As such, MAS-U

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<sup>205</sup> For a personal recollection on these events by Véliz (who is quite critical of Evo Morales and frequently references the latter’s “falangist” past), see Ignacio 2005.

<sup>206</sup> There is currently another movement called *neounzaguismo* (FSNB, Frente Socialista de Naciones Bolivianas), which represents the most radical wing of Bolivian falangism. It describes itself as a “national anti-liberal” movement opposed to both “anarchizing socialists” and the “exploitive right” while actively recruiting white-shirted “legionnaires.” It also is known to cite statements by Alvaro García Linera. See interview with FSNB founder, Horacio Poppe in *La Prensa* 2005.

<sup>207</sup> The Bolivian left has historically been dominated (at the mass or popular level) by syndicalism (both in its anarchist and nationalist variants), which more closely resembles the “socialism” of Georges Sorel, particularly with its emphasis on a myth-driven, millenarian popular revolution.

is best categorized as a “national-syndicalist” party and (since 1985) participated in various leftist electoral alliances.

When Evo Morales sought an independent political banner, he approached Añez Pedraza, with whom he struck a deal before the 1999 municipal elections (Ortiz de Zárate 2005).<sup>208</sup> The move brought new life to a small, obscure, nearly moribund party. It is unclear how much direct influence Añez Pedraza had over Morales and the future of MAS (“Unzaguismo” was eventually dropped). Certainly, Morales had been active in the IU coalitions since the late 1980s and his more immediate influence were *porista* syndicalists, such as Filemon Escobar.<sup>209</sup> But MAS-U also belonged to a political-ideological milieu that had been gelling since the late 1980s. Nevertheless, Morales’ meteoric rise into the national spotlight by 2002 would not have been likely without the political-institutional spaces and resources available through Participación Popular.

### **The Rebirth of *Katarismo***

Participación Popular also revitalized *katarismo*, the ethno-political movement of the Bolivian Altiplano. *Katarismo*, as a political phenomenon, first emerged in the 1970s. As a reaction against the official integrationist nationalism of the post-1952, a group of Aymara intellectuals formulated a new Aymara-nationalist political discourse.<sup>210</sup> Though this

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<sup>208</sup> As part of the deal, Añez Pedraza was named the party’s president-for-life. In the 1999 municipal elections, the party presented itself as IPSP-MAS.

<sup>209</sup> Filemon Escobar, a long-time member of POR, is often credited as the “ideologist” behind MAS. The two have, however, split since 2005. Since then, the role seems to have fallen to Alvaro García Linera.

<sup>210</sup> The *katarista* discourse ranges from extreme anti-white and anti-*mestizo* racism to less radical calls for a revalorization of traditional Aymara (and more general “indigenous”) social structures and culture. What binds

tendency was quite vibrant, eclectic, and influential among intellectual circles, it did not have much electoral weight outside small pockets of Aymara communities in the Altiplano. Part of the problem, of course, was that *katarismo* was (like the Bolivian left) prone to ideological and personal factionalism.

By 1993, the most influential branch of the *katarista* movement was Víctor Hugo Cárdenas' MRTKL. Having moved increasingly towards a more “pragmatic” tendency that emphasized Bolivia's multiculturalism, MRTKL had accommodated itself within the liberal-pluralist discourse (Albó 1994).<sup>211</sup> Like MBL, the MRTKL *kataristas* were moving towards the political “center” and the systemic parties. The MNR-MRTKL 1993 electoral victory also put Bolivia's multiculturalism at the political center stage. Many of the 1993-1997 reforms were aimed specifically at expanding the Bolivian imaginary to recognize its “multiethnic and pluricultural” reality.<sup>212</sup>

By 1997, however, the more ethno-centric and radical tendencies of *katarismo* were in ascendancy. In the 1995 and 1997 municipal elections, the dominant party across the rural Altiplano was Eje-Pachakuti (formerly Eje de Convergencia Patriótico). This small hybrid of Maoist and Aymara millenarian tendencies had, after 1993 decidedly embraced the more militant elements of Aymaran nationalism and reformulated itself as a *katarista* party. Within this trajectory emerged a new firebrand: Felipe Quispe. This relatively obscure yet infamous former EGTK guerrilla leader would emerge in 2002 with a new political party—Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti (MIP)—and place a respectable fifth in his first presidential

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the various *katarista* discourses together is a rejection of the “assimilationist” integrationism of the National Revolution and an emphasis on their “Indian-ness.” See Canessa 2000; Hurtado 1989; Albó 1988.

<sup>211</sup> For a personal reflection by Cárdenas himself, see his interview in Caldersón 2001. The interview is one in a series of interviews with Bolivian political leaders published through the UNDP.

<sup>212</sup> The phrase “multiethnic and pluricultural” comes from Article 1 of the 1995 Constitution.

contest. In sharp contrast to MRTKL (which was never as successful electorally), Quispe's MIP was openly militant and confrontational.

Like Morales, Quispe (who was also head of CSUTCB) built a political organization based in municipal governments. The economic and political resources made available by Participación Popular helped legitimize “el Mallku” (roughly translated as “the chief”), as Quispe is popularly known. Ironically, this allowed MIP to continue its confrontational anti-government stance even while enjoying economic resources from that same government. The legal-institutional structures of Participación Popular insulated MIP from the desire for state patronage and made accommodation or cooption unnecessary. Thus, Quispe (and other rural municipal leaders) could regularly attack the central government for ignoring rural communities even while using government funds to build “municipal” projects.<sup>213</sup>

### **Politics after Participación Popular**

Participación Popular fast-tracked many political careers. In addition to helping to lay the foundations for several new political organizations, local political leaders were also influential within the larger party system. Local political leaders could deliver votes, which made them assets for any national political party. Major parties therefore began shifting resources to find, recruit, and develop local political leaders. One way to do this was for major parties to use local elections to “test” the electoral potential of future candidates. Another way was for major parties to seek out popular local leaders and forge pre-electoral alliances—usually in exchange for shares of state patronage. This made the political party

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<sup>213</sup> Of course, charges that the central government ignored rural communities were historically accurate. Prior to the introduction of Participación Popular many rural communities had received little or no government funding for decades.



system much more dynamic and attuned to previously ignored local (and especially, rural) concerns. But this trend also encouraged regionalism and fractionalism, two worrisome trends.

It is important to note that Participación Popular did represent a concerted effort by members of Bolivia's political class to extend the boundaries of Bolivian democracy. Meeting regularly in the intellectual Foros, social scientists and political leaders frequently discussed ways to improve the function and legitimacy of Bolivia's representative institutions. Like the electoral reforms, Participación Popular was pursued as a means with which to strengthen Bolivian democracy. Both reforms were also the product of an elite consensus. Like the electoral reforms, the framework of Participación Popular was not decided in parliament. Rather, the reforms were hammered out in salon-style intellectual discussions. Bolivian elites, conscious of their stilts, were seeking ways to "pull up" local leaders.

The end result was mixed. Of all the reforms of the 1993-1997 Sánchez de Lozada government, Participación Popular was by far the most popular and is sure to be the most enduring. The new municipal political arenas also encouraged political parties to pay more attention to local issues and local leaders. But these same arenas also allowed local leaders to forge their own path, often in direct opposition to both the central government and the systemic parties. True, local leaders were not free of the pressure to allow themselves to be coopted in order to receive shares of state patronage. But this freedom also meant that local leaders who retained strong local support could continue to enjoy state resources—and spread local patronage to their own followers—without the need to cooperate with other political leaders or parties at the national (or even regional) level. One obvious result was that previously marginalized political movements could not flourish. The other result was that previously "national" parties began to concentrate towards their new "regional"

constituencies. The 1997 election would see the system of parliamentarized presidentialism stretched to its limits; 2002 would see the beginning of its disintegration.

### **The 1997 Election**

The 1997 general election was the first to follow the series of institutional and electoral reforms that altered the political landscape. As such, it marked a transition between the previous institutional period. In many ways, however, the 1997 campaign echoed the style and substance of the 1993 campaign, with relatively little attention paid to uninominal candidates in their own right. As in previous elections, no candidate won a majority. But this time votes were closely grouped around five parties—evidence of a highly fragmented national electorate. By 1997, coalition governments were the expected norm and each of the major candidates publicly speculated about and hinted at potential government coalitions; certainly, all the major candidates were openly willing to negotiate with any front-runners. And though parliament could now only choose between the two front-runners (who together had won less than forty percent of the vote) a new government was announced only days after the polls closed after a grand multiparty coalition—known as *la megacoalición* (or simply *la mega*)—formed around Banzer. Still, the new government also marked another peaceful transfer of power, with the co-governing MNR, MRTKL, and MBL going together into the opposition.

### **Parties and candidates**

Ten parties participated in the 1997 election, four fewer than in 1993. Of these, two belonged to the socialist left, one (Eje-Pachakuti) belonged to the *katarista* movement, and

another (PDB) represented a new independent centrist movement led by Eudoro Galindo.<sup>214</sup> The remaining six parties included the three systemic parties (ADN and MIR again campaigned separately), the center-left MBL, and the neopopulist Condepa and UCS. All six parties were essentially pro status quo. A possible exception was Condepa, which used anti-establishment rhetoric throughout its campaign but also showed itself willing to align itself with any majoritarian coalition government. 1997 marked the lowest point (electorally) for the Bolivian left, though this would eventually turn into the beginning of its recovery—by taking advantage of the new institutional made spaces available through Participación Popular. The election also saw parties actively seek to balance their tickets by publicly seeking alliances with indigenous and other independent social movements.

ADN entered the campaign as a broad multi-party front supporting Banzer's sixth presidential bid since 1979. The polyglot coalition included the Christian Democrats (PDC), Reyes Villa's NFR, the Christian Evangelical ARBOL, elements of the Bolivian Falange, as well as two indigenous movements: Katarismo Nacional Democrático (KND) and Movimiento Originario Revolucionario (MOR).<sup>215</sup> It was officially listed as ADN-NFR-PDC on the ballots. Banzer's 1997 campaign took a turn back towards the right, with an emphasis on nationalist discourse; his efforts to build alliances with indigenous leaders and movements suggested a return to the post-1964 military-*campesino* alliance. Additionally, the campaign named Jorge Quiroga—widely recognized as “the general's dauphin” (*Hoy* 1997f)—as the vice presidential candidate. A former finance minister during the 1989-1993 AP government,

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<sup>214</sup> Eudoro Galindo had been the vice presidential candidate for ADN in 1985; he was elected to parliament in 1989 and 1993 as an MNR candidate. The party's platform and campaign resembled that of MBL in 1993.

<sup>215</sup> KND was previously MKN; its 1993 presidential candidate, Fernando Untoja, would be elected as a plurinominal deputy from Oruro under the ADN-NFR-PDC alliance. Each of the various alliance member parties had done well in various municipal elections.

Quiroga represented ADN's young, technocratic wing. As in previous elections, Banzer declared himself confident of victory.

In contrast, the MNR began its campaign in disarray. The party had first nominated justice minister René Blattmann, a political independent personally hand-picked by Sánchez de Lozada. But in March, Blattmann unexpectedly left the presidential race, leaving the MNR without a candidate. Though elections were not scheduled for June, the mayor parties had been actively campaigning since before January. The party hastily nominated Juan Carlos Durán, the party's ranking senator from Santa Cruz. Despite well-known friction between Durán and Sánchez de Lozada, the party soon closed ranks behind the new candidate. Nevertheless, it was openly admitted that the slow start with a relatively unknown (at the national level) candidate was a serious limitation. There was also a great deal of tension during the campaign between many members of the rank-and-file (particularly those who thought the 1993-1997 government gave too many political positions to independents and MBL members rather than to loyal *movimientistas*) and Sánchez de Lozada. For the first time, many party leaders publicly worried about their performance at the polls.

Paz Zamora was again his party's presidential candidate. In 1997, MIR returned to a center-left discourse, though still not too distant from its former coalition member, ADN. MIR was again supported by Zamora Medinacelli (FRI), as well as by the smaller MCB (Movimiento Campesino de Bases) and ASD (Alternativa al Socialismo Democrático).<sup>216</sup> As in the past, MIR positioned itself as a nationalist-left party with an *entrouque histórico* between

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<sup>216</sup> ASD was a dissident faction of the Bolivian Communist Party. Both ASD and MCB had done well in municipal elections. By 1997, FRI had consolidated its position as the dominant political machine in the department of Tarija, regularly able to win numerous municipalities.

socialism and revolutionary nationalism.<sup>217</sup> Like ADN, the MIR ticket included a young technocrat as its vice presidential candidate. A former planning minister in the AP government, Samuel Doria Medina was a well-known entrepreneur from Chuquisaca.<sup>218</sup> The party seemed guardedly optimistic of success and from the start declared its willingness to enter into a coalition government.

By 1997, MBL was a solidly center-left party closely tied to the MNR. Although it retained its social policy and anti-corruption platforms, the party was no longer directly opposed to the post-1985 economic structural reforms and instead focused on reforms “within the model” to ameliorate social problems. This time the party named Miguel Urioste as its candidate, though its candidate list was little changed from 1993. The party’s vice presidential candidate was Marcial Fabricano, an independent indigenous leader from the eastern lowlands.<sup>219</sup> The move echoed the 1993 MNR-MRTKL pre-electoral alliance and was meant to demonstrate continued commitment to the “multiethnic and pluricultural” Bolivia. The alliance was perhaps more believable, since MBL had adopted a pluralist “multinational” rhetoric since the late 1980s.

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<sup>217</sup> The word *entrouque* (a barbarism of *entrocarse*) literally means an “encounter” or “accommodation” between two things. Its ideological use in this context is derived from dialectics: the *entrouque histórico* between socialism and revolutionary nationalism is a point in historical space where the two meet, and accommodate themselves to each other, creating a new political reality. The concept’s evolution is in many ways similar to the MNR’s formulation of a *revolución en democracia* (a “revolution within democracy”) developed between 1993 and 1997.

<sup>218</sup> Samuel Doria Medina owns (among other businesses) Bolivia’s largest cement factory (SOBOCE) as well as the national Burger King franchise.

<sup>219</sup> The Guaraní leader, Fabricano, had also been courted by MIR, which wanted him for its vice presidential candidate. Fabricano was at the time president of CIDOB (Confederación de los Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia), an organization that represents several Guaraní-Izoceño, Chiquitano, Ayoreo, and Guarayo lowland indigenous communities.

Condepa and UCS both went to the polls in 1997 without their charismatic founders. Max Fernández had died in November 1995, leaving his party in the hands of his son, Johnny Fernández. Since he was too young to run for president, UCS named Ivo Kuljis—the 1993 Condepa vice presidential candidate—as its presidential candidate.<sup>220</sup> Condepa had started the campaign with Carlos Palenque, but his sudden death from a heart attack only three months before the election led the party to name Remedios Loza (his on-air partner) as its presidential candidate. Unlike 1993, this time both neopopulist parties were acknowledged as serious electoral threats to the three systemic parties, especially since parliament would have to select a president from only among the top two (rather than three) front-runners. Nevertheless, internal strains following the death of their central leader were soon evident, particularly within Condepa, as many of its 1993 candidates defected to other party lists.<sup>221</sup>

In 1997 the Bolivian left was reduced to three, divided electoral fronts, none of which expected to do well. Early in the year, there was an alliance between Jerjes Justiniano's VSB (Vanguardia Socialista Boliviana, a re-named PS-1), and Ramiro Barrenechea's Eje-Pachakuti. In 1997 Eje-Pachakuti was still ideologically closer to the Marxist left than to the more "autochthonous" *katarista* parties.<sup>222</sup> The two were allied until March; after the

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<sup>220</sup> The minimum age requirement to run for president in Bolivia is 35 years.

<sup>221</sup> This was in part due to in-fighting within the top ranks of Condepa's familial leadership. Palenque's ex-wife, Monica Medina (they had recently fought a bitter divorce battle), demanded control over the party's destiny. Meanwhile other factions rallied around Palenque's daughter, Verónica Palenque Yanguas (who went on to be elected a uninominal deputy from La Paz).

<sup>222</sup> Autochthonous *katarista* parties include MRTKL and FULKA. Such parties emphasized their own ethnic "endogenousness" over ideology, even rejecting reliance on "foreign" Marxist ideas not developed from their own indigenous experience. In the Bolivian lexicon, *autóctono* (a term learned from anthropologists) is used to describe "truly native" phenomenon (e.g. music, art, clothing) that is categorically different—and ostensibly more "pure"—than phenomenon marked by external influences. By 1993, Eje-Pachakuti had moved towards

breakup, a VSB spokesperson explained that it had become unclear whether *campesinos* would support IU or Eje (*La Razón* 1997c). The other electoral option on the left was the “People’s Front” alliance between IU and ASP, which principally represented the *cocalero* syndicates of the Chapare region. The IU alliance led by the Communist Party (PCB) included MAS-U, FSN, and FULKA. Between January and February, several names were speculated as potential presidential candidates for the IU-ASP electoral front, including Evo Morales.<sup>223</sup> The alliance eventually named Alejo Véliz (ASP).<sup>224</sup> As late as February, IU expressed interest in an alliance with the rest of the left, but its spokesperson accused Jerjes Justiniano of *candillismo*, criticizing him for refusing to submit candidates to approval from “the bases”—local, grass-roots social movements and syndicate organizations (*Hoy* 1997d). In the end, the left entered the 1997 election again marginalized and bitterly divided.

### The Electoral Campaign

The 1997 electoral campaign marked the apex of neoliberalism in Bolivia. All of the major candidates accepted the basic neoliberal model in place since 1985; only the three, marginalized candidates on the left challenged the model.<sup>225</sup> By 1997, election campaigns had also become lengthy and complex processes, with most parties devoting a great deal of

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an Aymran millenarian position, but much of its leadership still expressed a Maoist ideological orientation and analytical framework.

<sup>223</sup> Other potential candidates discussed included Manuel Morales Davila (FSN) and three PCB members: Marcos Domic, Ignacio Mendoza, and Simón Réyes. Evo Morales went on to be elected as a uninominal deputy.

<sup>224</sup> Alejo Véliz had a long trajectory within the IU alliance, as a syndicalist leader, going back to the early 1980s.

<sup>225</sup> IU, Eje-Pachakuti, and VSB, as well as the center-left PDB, were rarely mentioned in the electoral coverage, which focused on the remaining six parties (MNR, ADN, MIR, MBL, Condepa, and UCS). When they were mentioned, they were referred to as “small” or “minoritarian” parties. The newspaper that gave the most coverage to these parties was *La Razón*, which overall had the most extensive and comprehensive coverage.

attention to internal polling, television and image consultants, and other “media politics” strategies. Parties began gearing up before the end of 1996—six months before the 1 June 1997 election—and most parties had their campaign strategy teams (if not their candidates) in place by January. The Bolivian press also began to devote attention to the campaigns themselves (e.g. their finances, who their outside consultants were, leaked strategy rumors), going beyond simply focusing on candidates. By now, formal electoral democracy seemed consolidated and the general election was taken for granted; no groups called for a voter boycott. The parties again focused on the personal qualities of their presidential candidates, with only the three leftist parties attacking the neoliberal model. As in previous elections, no presidential candidate was expected to win a majority of the popular vote, and speculations about potential post-electoral alliances were common throughout the six-month campaign. Even more than in 1993, candidates sent each other clear signals suggesting potential alliances.

No one single issue dominated, though several parties brought attention at various times to issues as varied as coca eradication, unemployment, small business support, and education. Instead, the 1997 campaigns revolved around “management” questions. The systemic opposition ADN and MIR did not challenge the incumbent government’s general economic policy framework, but criticized it for not expanding the economy fast enough. In response, the government parties MNR, MBL, and UCS simply defended their record. MBL’s Juan Del Granado campaigned on the promise to “deepen the transformations begun in 1993” (*La Razón* 1997d). Similarly, many in the MNR echoed Sánchez de Lozada’s call for



a “revolution within democracy” meant to expand the 1993-1997 reforms.<sup>226</sup> Instead of specific issues, most of the campaign media coverage focused on presidential candidates’ personal qualities and internal campaign strategies. The campaigns were a mix of personalism (focusing on the personal, moral character or charisma of the candidates) and technocracy (focusing on their technical competence).

Media campaign coverage also frequently focused on personal scandals or hiccups within campaigns, such as the *narcovinculos* case that followed Paz Zamora.<sup>227</sup> Due to the scandal, the United States had rescinded the travel visas of several MIR members (including Paz Zamora) in 1995. While the US embassy denied accusations that it was “de-Bolivianizing” the vote or threatening to “veto” a Paz Zamora presidency, incumbent president Sánchez de Lozada warned that a Paz Zamora presidency would damage bilateral relations with Washington. The issue took center stage during April, after a diplomatic memo was leaked that showed that the US would not block a Paz Zamora presidency, though it might reduce economic assistance. Interestingly, the MIR campaign chose not to adopt an anti-imperialist response, but rather “celebrated” the news that Washington would not block their leader’s victory (*Presencia* 1997c).<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> The phrase “*revolución en democracia*” was frequently mentioned during the campaign. The term was meant to explain the transformation of the MNR’s ideological program from its 1952 state-corporatism to its new liberal-pluralism. The phrases also made clear that MNR leaders presented the 1993-1997 reforms as another phase of their party’s historical revolutionary trajectory. For an overview, see San Martín Arzabe 1998.

<sup>227</sup> The issue stemmed from accusations that high-ranking members of MIR had collaborated with narcotrafickers during the 1989-1993 AP government. The party’s sub-chief, Oscar Eid Franco (the 1985 vice presidential candidate), was implicated in 1996 and held in prison for four years. Eid Franco and members of his party continued to declare their innocence, declaring the trial a political persecution by Sánchez de Lozada and the MNR to disrupt their 1997 campaign. For a contemporary review of the case, see LAW 1996.

<sup>228</sup> Later in the campaign, when asked about a potential “veto” by the US, Paz Zamora called the rescinding of his visa “unjust,” but said that the US made its decisions based on “reasons of state,” then countered that “if

Another campaign hiccup involved the issue of gender quotas. On 31 March, the National Electoral Court (CNE) declared that seven parties would have to revise their candidate lists because they had not meet the gender quota in the new electoral law. Only the MNR, ADN, and MBL had met the requirements.<sup>229</sup> Several parties were required to modify their lists in a few departments. The parties with the least female representation in their lists were Eje-Pachakuti, VSB, and IU, which had not included a single female in their senate candidate lists (*La Razón* 1997b; *Presencia* 1997d; *Opinión* 1997a). The parties were given an extension to submit revised candidate lists.

Unlike 1993, none of the campaigns published comprehensive platforms, focusing instead on television “spots” and other means to push slogans and candidate image. Several campaigns admitted that their first priority was simply to familiarize voters with their candidate (*Hoy* 1997b). In particular, the MNR focused much of its March campaign familiarizing voters with Durán, the replacement presidential candidate, who was a relatively unknown figure outside Santa Cruz (which he had represented in parliament since 1989). Similarly, MBL and UCS dedicated much of their time familiarizing voters with Urioste (a social scientist and political analyst) and Kuljis (a Santa Cruz business mogul). Even established candidates such as Banzer and Paz Zamora reverted to gimmicks. Paz Zamora employed a *gallomóvil*—a rooster-shaped truck that toured the country. ADN adopted a popular pop song (“Tic-tic-tac”) to give its campaign a “youthful, energetic image” (*Hoy*

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there was a veto against me I would not have [just] shared dinner with the president of the IMF” (*Presencia* 1997b). Such a response by Paz Zamora and MIR stands in stark contrast to the response to similar speculations of US reaction in 2002 by Evo Morales and MAS, which was more confrontational and non-apologetic. While Paz Zamora responded by emphasizing his friendship with and willingness to accommodate the American government, Morales responded with a defiant anti-imperialism.

<sup>229</sup> The electoral law stipulated that one in every three candidates (both titular and substitute) in plurinominal lists must be female; senate candidate lists must include at least one female candidate (titular or substitute).

1997b). Condepa again relied on the popularity of its charismatic founder. By May, however, the campaigns took a negative turn leading to several denunciations before the CNE. These included accusations that ADN and NFR operatives had bugged MNR campaign telephones, accusations that the yearly BONOSOL pension payments was an MNR campaign tool, and accusations that the MNR was behind an independent organization's television spots comparing Banzer to García Meza. The series of negative attacks in the last weeks of the campaign led the CNE to call on parties to sign a "gentlemen's agreement" document (*El Diario* 1997b).

Interestingly, the major parties explicitly self-identified themselves as "middle class" parties. The MNR's Raúl Lema recalled the party's history as a *partido policlasista* (a "polyclass party") when he stated that the MNR continued to "express the country in its totality"—but acknowledged that the middle class had been predominant within the party since 1964 (*Hoy* 1997e). In contrast, Hugo Carvajal deliberately described MIR as a middle-class party, adding that his party had "matured" politically and moved from its "adolescent" idealism to a phase of "new political projection" (*Hoy* 1997e). Even Condepa's Eduardo Paz remarked that his party was an expression of the new "*cholo* bourgeoisie" (artisans, merchants, and industrialists) who felt excluded from the "official" (*criollo* or "white") entrepreneurial community; still, he also articulated his party's roots in an Aymara Altiplano "consciousness" (*Hoy* 1997e). A significant number of candidates were independent businessmen, prompting Juan Antonio Chahín (UCS vice presidential candidate) to declare that "this is the historical moment of the Bolivian businessman" (*Opinión* 1997d). Such pro-market confidence was most directly expressed in UCS, whose presidential candidate (Kuljis) promised to "maintain the economy's stability" (*Opinión* 1997c) and declared that Bolivians "only have to work to get out of poverty" (*Opinión* 1997b). The campaigns' heavy coverage of and attention to the

business acumen and managerial skills of potential presidents again reflected an image of governance as primarily a technical (rather than ideological or political) matter.

Candidate debates were again restrictive in 1997. The largest multi-candidate debate was held in the city of Santa Cruz (hosted by CAINCO on 25 March) and included only the five presidential candidates from the MNR, ADN, MIR, UCS, and MBL. The Condepa candidate (Remedios Loza) was invited, but chose not to attend. None of the candidates at the debate criticized the neoliberal economic model, though each proposed ways to improve social conditions. Interestingly, the MNR candidate, Juan Carlos Durán, criticized his party's incumbent president for not keeping his promises; when pressed by a discussant about the 500,000 jobs promised in 1993, Durán bluntly responded: "Go ask Goni, don't ask me" (*Opinión* 1997c). The main television debate (Canal Bolivisión, 1 April) was limited to only three candidates: Banzer, Durán, and Paz Zamora. That debate revolved around personality, rather than issues, and was criticized by several of the parties not invited to the debate. Condepa's spokesperson qualified the exclusion of their candidate as "discrimination." Marcos Domic (IU) called the televised debate "tasteless" and "without substantial differences" since none of the candidates opposed the neoliberal framework (*Hoy* 1997a). In contrast, the UCS vice presidential candidate (Chahín) only suggested the debate was "flavorless," but had positive things to say about Durán. The final debate (on 25 May)—moderated by Carlos Mesa—was again limited to only Banzer, Durán, and Paz Zamora. Banzer's status as an ex-dictator was raised by one of the discussants, to which Banzer replied that his conscience was clear and that he had "nothing to ask God's forgiveness for" (*Presencia* 1997b). Overall, the 1997 presidential debates showed a convergence around neoliberalism, with anti-neoliberal candidates excluded, and focusing on the three systemic parties.

The leftist parties were further marginalized by a controversial reform that changed state funding for electoral campaigns. Under the new law, parties were awarded funds based on their share of votes in the previous election (parties that did not exist in the previous election received no state funding); parties and candidates were free, of course, to spend their own funds. Parties would also have to return whatever money they spent on their campaign if they did not meet the electoral threshold (3%). Based on the 1993 election results, nearly 70% of all state funding went to only three parties: the MNR, ADN, and MIR, with most of the rest going to Condepa and UCS.

Despite being marginalized throughout the campaign, the left's candidates were also deeply divided in public. Carlos Mesa interviewed the presidential candidates from IU (Alejo Véliz) and Eje-Pachakuti (Ramiro Berrenechea) on his *De Cerca* ("Up Close") television program on 1 April.<sup>230</sup> Marcos Domic praised his party's candidate's performance and contrasted Véliz's "serenity and firmness" to Barrenechea, who "went off on tangents" (*Hoy* 1997a). In part, the left's divisions were ideological—particularly between Marxist-Leninist, Maoist, and syndicalist positions. Justiniano (VSB) reflected an orthodox Euro-Marxist perspective. In an interview with Guido Peredo Montaña, Justiniano criticized the neoliberal model, before adding: "the left has a scientific method, historical materialism, which permits an analysis of reality" (*Los Tiempos* 1997). The remainder of the interview reflected an orthodox and highly intellectualized Marxist vision, complete with an analysis of the "internal contradictions" found within the neoliberal market-driven model. At the other

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<sup>230</sup> Carlos Mesa is a member of the one of the most established families of the La Paz intelligentsia and political class. His parents, José Mesa and Teresa Gisbert de Mesa, are celebrated Bolivian historians; Teresa Gisbert founded the country's National Art Museum. Carlos Mesa has also worked as political journalist since the 1980s, and is among the principal owners of the PAT television network. His various programs, such as *De Cerca* and *Última Hora* are in many ways similar to CNN's *Larry King Live*.

extreme was IU, which had abandoned ideological orthodoxy and turned towards a more traditional syndicalist strategy, as the legally registered “IU” became more a political vehicle for a variety of rural and sectoral *sindicatos* aligned with the ASP. Within a few years, the ideologues of the traditional IU alliance would become marginalized by a new set of un-ideological leaders who relied more on syndicalist and other social movements than on ideological arguments.

### **Election Results**

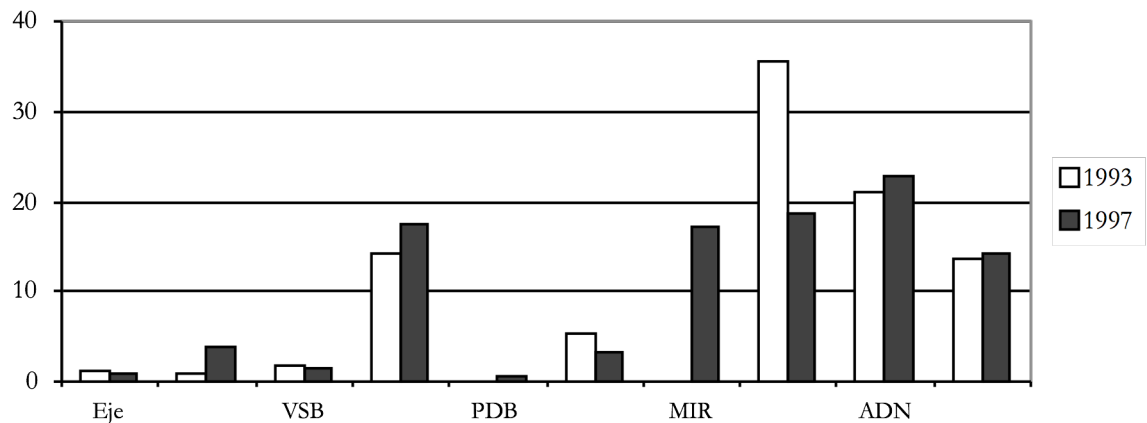
The 1 June 1997 general election saw a broad dispersion of the popular presidential vote between five candidates. Though Banzer was the plurality winner (22.75%), the fifth-place Kuljis was not far behind (14.30%). Banzer did slightly increase his vote share from 1993, but by less than two percent points. Moreover, the continued decline in voter turnout (to 69.95%) meant that for the first time more registered voters had abstained than had voted for the plurality winner. The MNR saw the sharpest decline (relative to 1993) in voter support of any party, losing almost half of its previous vote share.

The aggregate share of votes for the three systemic parties was only 58.46%, comparable to their collective share in 1993. Much of the rest of the vote was distributed among the neopopulist parties, which accounted for another third of the valid vote. 1997 also saw the first signs of a recovery for the left, with IU (the only leftist party to increase its vote share) increasing its vote threefold. The effective number of electoral parties also increased substantially (from 4.7 to 5.9). Finally, just as voter turnout continued to decline, the share of blank and null presidential votes increased slightly as well (to 3.37% and 2.95% respectively). These overall trends demonstrated widespread dissatisfaction with systemic

parties and growing voter apathy. While Bolivia's democratic system was not yet in crisis, it had clearly entered a period of deep malaise.

Figure 6.1

Change in support for parties between 1993 and 1997, as percent of valid vote



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. ADN figures for 1993 reflect AP alliance.

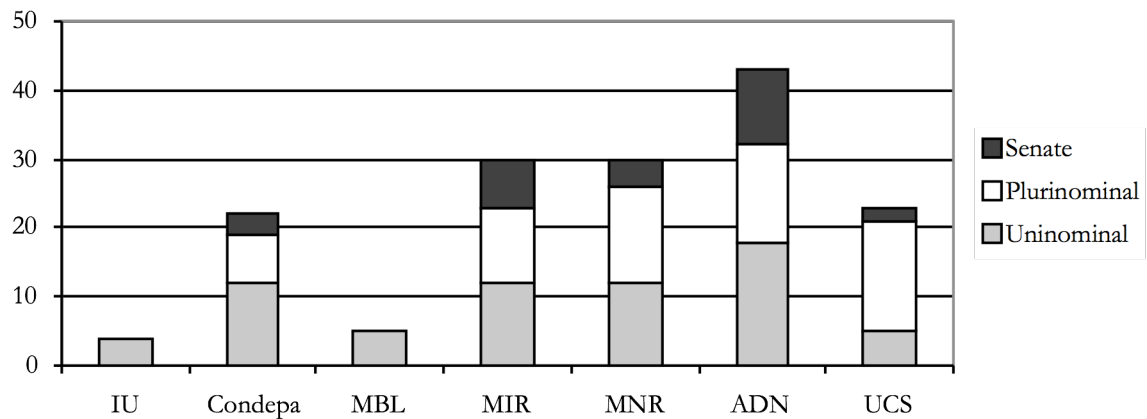
Banzer's 1997 plurality victory would be the second-lowest plurality victory of any Bolivian democratic election (the lowest would be in 2002). This election also was the first in which department votes varied dramatically (see Table 6.2). With the exception of Condepa (which did not receive more than 3.45% of the vote in any *media luna* department), votes for the five largest parties were fairly balanced across departments. Nevertheless, the first and second place winners varied widely. While the MNR did not win a single department, it placed second in four—all in the *media luna*. In many departments, however, the MNR was only narrowly edged out.<sup>231</sup> In contrast, first-place ADN and fourth-place MIR won the most senate seats. MIR won in three southern departments (Chuquisaca, Potosí, Tarija) and

<sup>231</sup> The narrowest margin was in Chuquisaca, where the MNR came in third behind ADN by only 910 votes.

placed second in Cochabamba. ADN won in four departments (Cochabamba, Oruro, Beni, Pando) and placed second in three others (Chuquisaca, La Paz, Potosí). Condepa won in La Paz and placed second in Oruro; UCS won in Santa Cruz. The result was a senate that included five parties, none with a majority (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2

Legislative seats by party, 1997



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

Though the number of parties that won parliamentary seats decreased (by one) to seven, the effective number of legislative parties increased sharply (from 3.7 to 5.5). This reflected the relatively equal dispersion of seats between five major parties. By 1997, Bolivia had shifted from a three-party system to a five-party system. Other than the five major parties, only MBL and IU surpassed the electoral threshold (3%), though they won all their seats from uninominal districts. Despite the use of an electoral threshold and a D'Hondt counting formula, the aggregate disproportionality actually decreased (to 0.033), though differences within departments were again mixed.



The election results also reflected growing discontent with continued neoliberal economic policies. Though six legislative parties supported continued market-oriented economic policies, all of their presidential candidates—including the MNR’s Durán—had criticizing some of the social costs of the neoliberal reforms during their campaigns and promised to improve the state’s economic regulatory capacity. Banzer had rigorously campaigned with the promise of a “social market economy” (modeled after the German post-war economy) as an alternative to neoliberalism.<sup>232</sup> The party with the strongest anti-neoliberal discourse (outside the left) was Condepa, which saw a higher increase in vote share than any other party (again, outside the left). Condepa also increased its share of votes in other Andean departments, especially Oruro and Potosí.

Differences across departments demonstrate the importance of regional strongholds (see Table 6.2). Though the MNR was competitive across most departments—which accounted for the party finishing second in the presidential vote—it was unable to win a single department. Fourth-placed MIR secured as many seats as the second-place MNR by its heavy vote concentration in southern departments. Condepa, with significant presence in only three departments, was able to secure nearly as many legislative seats due to regional vote concentration. As in previous elections, La Paz was the department that least supported the systemic parties with only 43.59% of the valid vote and only 13 of the department’s 31 lower house seats. Condepa alone took 40.83% of the department’s valid vote and 14 lower house seats (11 of them from single-seat districts). More than anywhere else, voters in La Paz—and especially the city of El Alto—voted for change. But so long as *media luna* departments continued to back systemic parties, presidents could be elected without La Paz.

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<sup>232</sup> This economic model was promoted in Bolivia by both Fundación Milenio (funded by the Christian democrat Konrad Adenauer Stiftung) and ILDIS (funded by the social democrat Friederich Ebert Stiftung).

Table 6.2

Percent of valid vote for lead 1997 presidential candidates, by department

	Hugo Banzer (ADN)	J. Carlos Durán (MNR)	Remedios Loza (Condepa)	Paz Zamora (MIR)
La Paz	20.16	12.16	<b>40.83</b>	11.27
Cochabamba	<b>25.32</b>	13.22	3.83	19.65
Oruro	<b>23.16</b>	16.88	20.87	17.20
Potosí	19.39	18.53	12.13	<b>21.86</b>
Chuquisaca	19.70	19.00	9.52	<b>20.32</b>
Tarija	11.10	26.38	3.45	<b>42.48</b>
Santa Cruz <sup>a</sup>	20.04	25.04	2.13	15.77
Beni	<b>34.23</b>	32.63	1.49	9.30
Pando	<b>40.68</b>	27.88	2.76	14.48
National	22.75	18.59	17.52	17.12

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral; department winners in bold.

<sup>a</sup> UCS placed first in Santa Cruz with 27.62% of the valid vote.

The uninominal districts had mixed effects, but reflected the parties' previous strongholds. Several MBL uninominal candidates were competitive nationwide, but where it won its five seats was in rural Chuquisaca (2), the city of La Paz (1), and rural Potosí (2).<sup>233</sup> ADN swept the three Pando districts, most of Beni, and all of the Cochabamba city districts. The latter were in large measure due to its alliance with NFR, the right-populist party whose political machine controlled the city. MIR did best in Tarija, where it won four of five uninominal seats. The MNR similarly did best in its traditional strongholds across rural Santa Cruz and Beni, where it won five uninominal seats. The party that did least was UCS, which despite its high presidential vote share, only managed to win five uninominal districts: four in Santa Cruz and one in Oruro (the birthplace of the party's founder, Max Fernández).

<sup>233</sup> The La Paz city district was contested by Juan Del Granado, one of the most prominent figures in the party and a member of the city's middle class intelligentsia. The four rural districts were in the rural countryside just north of Sucre, areas where the MBL had historically done well and where it held several municipal governments.

The anti-systemic vote was again heavily concentrated in El Alto and the Andean Altiplano, but now also included the Cochabamba tropical valleys—particularly in the Chapare. Condepa won three of the four uninominal seats in El Alto and placed second in the other by 814 votes. The self-described “endogenous” party also won five of the six rural uninominal La Paz districts and placed second in the other by 915 votes. In Cochabamba, IU handily won four uninominal districts and placed a solid third (with 20.20%) in the department’s presidential vote (five percent points ahead of the MNR).<sup>234</sup> Uninominal votes were strongly correlated with presidential votes across most of the country, and in Cochabamba’s rural uninominal districts, the IU presidential candidate won a clear majority in two of the districts and first pluralities in all but one district (where it lost to MIR by 616 votes). Although IU did poorly in every other department, as well as in urban Cochabamba districts, 1997 marked a turning point for a reinvigorated syndicalist movement. Overall, the same areas that had regularly opposed the three dominant systemic parties again voted for opposition candidates and parties. Unlike in previous elections, this time the new electoral rules allowed them to elect a large number of parliamentary representatives. 1997 showed that small parties, if they are heavily concentrated in a single region, could elect a significant number of legislators.

### **Government Formation**

Because no candidate won an absolute majority, it fell to parliament to select the president. This time a coalition government was formed within hours after the polls closed. While the MNR waited for official results, ADN and MIR representatives began crafting a

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<sup>234</sup> Among the uninominal deputies elected by IU was Evo Morales, who won 70.13% of the valid vote in his district, the highest share of any uninominal deputy elected.

coalition agreement by dawn of 2 June—less than a day after the polls had closed. Early returns showed ADN the likely plurality winner, while the MNR, MIR, and Condepa still disputed second place in the early counts. In a press conference shortly after midnight, only hours after polls closed, Banzer declared himself the winner and promised “a government without rancor or discord” (*Presencia* 1997a). By the morning editions of most newspapers on 2 June, several parties were already positioning themselves for an alliance with Banzer. The fifth-place UCS candidate, Ivo Kuljis, declared himself willing to “give its political support to any party in order to form a government” (*Primera Plana* 1997). MIR showed itself disposed to another alliance with ADN. Shortly after midnight, Paz Zamora recognized “the ample electoral victory of the General Hugo Banzer” and assured that a government would be formed by 6 August (*La Razón* 1997a). Paz Zamora also declared the election as a sign that Bolivians had voted for change and “celebrated the defeat of *gonismo*.” Though MIR was still a potential second place finisher, and thus a presidential contender, Paz Zamora ensured his party would back ADN. The only condition was that MIR’s vice presidential candidate, Samuel Doria Media, should be made vice president (as the ADN candidate had been in 1989) in the event that MIR finished second place in the official results (*El Diario* 1997a). Condepa’s Remedios Loza announced a party assembly to decide on any future alliance.

The incumbent president, Sánchez de Lozada, declared that he felt confident that voters had voted “for continuity” but insisted that it was too early to speak about possible coalitions without knowing the official final results. The MNR party chief further declared that his party was willing to negotiate an alliance that “guaranteed [the] continuity of structural reforms” (*La Razón* 1997a). Meanwhile, Durán, insisted that he had won a “comfortable second place” and would wait for final results to measure his party’s bargaining

position before engaging in coalition building. He also insisted that any such negotiations would go through him, and not Sánchez de Lozada (the party chief).

Ironically, though Banzer had earlier insisted that he did not want his government to be a “*juntucha*” (colloq. “potluck”; *Hoy* 1997c), his 1997 coalition, known as *la mega* (short for *la megacoalición*) was the broadest since democratization, including nearly every electorally significant party (see Table 6.3). On 4 June—five days before the Corte Nacional Electoral announced the official results with several legislative seats still uncertain—Banzer signed two separate coalition agreements. The first was the “Compromise for Bolivia” with MIR and UCS. The second was a separate “Pact for Democracy and the Common Good” with Condepa. Combined, this gave Banzer a parliamentary supermajority with 95 deputies (73% of the lower house) and 23 senators (85% of the Senate). The cabinet would be dominated by ADN, which retained seven of fourteen posts (including the Chancellery); the remaining seven posts were distributed between MIR, NFR, UCS, and Condepa.<sup>235</sup> On 5 August 1997, when congress convened to officially elect the new Bolivian president, Banzer received 118 votes; only the MNR’s 30 deputies and senators voted for Durán (MBL and IU both abstained).

The new Banzer government began with little effective opposition since *la mega* controlled supermajorities in both legislative houses. But because the governing coalition was so broad, it was often difficult for Banzer’s government to coordinate policy objectives. In contrast, the MNR and MBL, which together held 35 parliamentary seats (31 in the lower house, a sizeable 25%), were able to mount a more coordinated opposition. The real Achilles

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<sup>235</sup> MIR received the most ministries, including Health, Labor, and Commerce. Condepa was awarded the ministries of agriculture and housing. The ministry of economic development went to Kuljis and Erick Reyes Villa (Manfred’s brother) received the ministry of sustainable development.

heel of the coalition was Condepa. It was soon evident that the party had joined the coalition principally seeking patronage spoils. Within a year, Banzer officially dismissed Condepa from his coalition. The move reduced his parliamentary strength to 76 deputies (58% of the lower house) and 20 senators (74% of the Senate). While this still left Banzer with a supermajority in the Senate, the government now had a narrower majority in the lower house.

Table 6.3

Government and opposition parliamentary strength, 1997

	Uninominal Deputies	Plurinominal Deputies	Senators	Total
Government parties	47	48	23	118
<i>ADN</i>	18	14	11	43
<i>MIR</i>	12	11	7	30
<i>UCS</i>	5	16	2	23
<i>Condepa</i> <sup>a</sup>	12	7	3	22
Opposition parties	21	14	4	39
<i>MNR</i>	12	14	4	30
<i>MBL</i>	5			5
<i>IU</i>	4			4

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

<sup>a</sup> Condepa was dismissed from the government coalition on 6 August 1998.

The 1997-2001 Banzer administration was marked by growing social unrest and declining popular support for political institutions. Almost from the start, a series of protests by the COB in demand of increased salaries and widespread anti-government mobilizations by the *cocaleros* challenged the government. The *cocalero* protests were politically difficult, because their leader Evo Morales sat in parliament, from where they enjoyed both a public audience and parliamentary immunity. Protests against the forced eradication of excess coca production in the Chapare led to numerous confrontations between *cocaleros* and government forces, often with loss of life. Another critical moment was the April 2000 Cochabamba

*guerra del agua* (“water war”), a series of protests against the announcement by the city’s recently-privatized water company that it would increase rates by nearly 300 percent. The several days of street violence left one dead and more than a hundred injured.

The Cochabamba *guerra del agua* was soon followed by mass assaults by CSUTCB members (led by Felipe Quispe) against military installations in the Altiplano that resulted in at least six dead and several more injured. Starting in the late 1990s, the Altiplano roads were also frequently blockaded by CSUTCB-led indigenous-*campesino* protests. By 2001, Banzer’s presidency was in a state of perpetual siege by three types of social movements: the *cocaleros*, led by Evo Morales; the indigenous *campesinos* of the CSUTCB, led by Felipe Quispe; and a revitalized labor movement, led by a revitalized COB. After years of ineffectiveness and obscurity, a new generation of young, radical leaders had assumed central roles in the COB and its allied *sindicatos*. These included: Oscar Olivera, of the Federación de Trabajadores Fabriles de Cochabamba; Roberto De la Cruz, of the Central Obrera Regional de El Alto (COR-El Alto); and Jaime Solares, of the COB itself. The last two figures would play prominent roles in the October 2003 *guerra del gas*.

Banzer did not finish his presidency. Diagnosed with lung cancer in July 2001, Banzer officially stepped down from office on 6 August 2001 and handed power to his vice president, Jorge Quiroga. Banzer died on 5 May 2002. Quiroga governed for only a year, though he was given a substantial goodwill “truce” by various social movements. In the end, Quiroga pursued much the same government policy as Banzer and retained the ADN-MIR-UCS alliance. By the time Quiroga stepped down from office in 2002, the country was in an acute political crisis compounded by an economic recession; by now a substantial—and growing—portion of the electorate opposed the continuation of neoliberal policies. More

importantly, by the end of the Banzer-Quiroga regime, support for the systemic parties was at a low point, signaling the danger that the party system in place since 1985 might collapse.

### **The 2002 Election**

The 2002 election was a turning point in Bolivian politics. By the end of the Banzer-Quiroga regime, social unrest had become endemic. The political party system faced a crisis of legitimacy. The editorial pages of newspapers—which had frequently been critical of individual candidates or parties—were now openly critical not only of most (if not all) the major parties, but criticized the legitimacy of the basic institutional norms and institutions of the country’s democracy. Unlike in previous elections, most editorials now denounced (where they once praised) the process of coalition building as “antidemocratic” (Prada 2002) or a system where “the losers have the key to power” (Bigio 2002). Similarly, because of the late start by most parties in nominating candidates, much of the early press coverage focused on the contentious nominations themselves as indicative of internal crisis within parties.

While election results would show a marked polarization and rejection of “traditional politics” by a significant number of the electorate, the campaign was also marked by a bitter infighting between the candidates of the parties most associated with the neoliberal system. Meanwhile, two anti-systemic, anti-neoliberal parties attacked the traditional parties. These two parties—MAS and MIP—would subsequently form the most effective opposition legislative bloc since the 1982-1985 period. A constant reference to “crisis” (whether economic or political) also marked the 2002 election and was perhaps best exemplified by



the MNR campaign.<sup>236</sup> In the end, the election produced another multi-party coalition government, though this time the stage was set for a weak government that would last only fourteen months.

### **Parties and Candidates**

Eleven parties participated in the 2002 general election, only one more than in 1997, though half of these were new parties. Only one, Jerjes Justiniano's new Partido Socialista (PS) represented the orthodox socialist left, one (MIP) belonged to the radical *katarista* movement, and another (MAS) represented the powerful new syndicalist social movements. Two parties represented independent, middle-class centrist positions, though these soon lost their electoral potential. Condepa was by now in a state of crisis following bitter infighting between its several factions, leading most of its leaders to defect to other parties (most often to NFR or UCS). The remaining five parties represented the "traditional" systemic party system, though NFR was a newcomer and frequently employed anti-neoliberal, populist rhetoric.<sup>237</sup> Most party campaigns had late starts compared to 1997, with many parties not defining their titular candidates until mid-March, only three months before the 30 June election.

The 2002 election marked the first time ADN entered an electoral race without Banzer as its presidential candidate. The party also could not count on Banzer's successor, the somewhat popular Jorge Quiroga, since an incumbent president was not constitutionally

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<sup>236</sup> For a look at "crisis" as a campaign strategy, see *Our Brand is Crisis* (2005), a documentary film about the Sánchez de Lozada 2002 presidential campaign.

<sup>237</sup> NFR's anti-neoliberal rhetoric was never really convincing. The party's founder, Manfred Reyes Villa, was too closely tied to Banzer's ADN and had a known reputation for its center-right, pro-business, and middle-class oriented administration of the city of Cochabamba.

allowed to run for reelection. The party was also split early on, as several party members complained about the practice of *dedocracia* (colloq. “fingerocracy”) within the party, as Banzer still insisted on dictating the candidate lists. Efforts to internally restructure the party only increased the divisions between Banzer loyalists (the *dinosaurios*) and the modernizing *pitufos* (“smurfs”) who demanded a more democratic party structure. By March, members of the party’s La Paz bloc loyal to Ronald MacLean (a former mayor of the city), threatened to leave the party. In the end, the party named MacLean as the presidential candidate; he was joined by Tito Hoz de Vila (elected deputy from Cochabamba since 1989). The two declared themselves “candidates for change” and promised to “clean house” within their party (*Los Tiempos* 2002c). They received only lukewarm support from the party’s political machine, however. Likewise, Quiroga publicly announced very early that he would not support any campaign “in order to not distract from [his] government” (*La Razón* 2002e).

Sánchez de Lozada was again the MNR’s presidential candidate. This time he was accompanied by Carlos Mesa. The announcement was made on 4 February, beating most other parties in announcing their official candidates by nearly a month. The party was internally divided, however. Though the bulk of the rank and file backed the party chief (Sánchez de Lozada), three other factions vied in the party’s internal elections. The deepest rift was with the MNR’s old guard, which backed Juan Carlos Durán and Moira Paz Estenssoro, and sought to move the party back towards its national-revolutionary roots.<sup>238</sup> The MNR also continued its alliance with MBL, this time campaigning formally as an MNR-MBL joint electoral list. Sánchez de Lozada also brought in a team of campaign advisors led James Carville, Bill Clinton’s campaign strategist. With a slick media campaign under the

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<sup>238</sup> The other two rival factions were led by Carlos Sánchez Berzaín and José Guillermo Justiniano.

slogan “*Bolivia sí puede*” (“Yes, Bolivia can”) that combined negative attack ads (particularly against Reyes Villa) with an emphasis on Sánchez de Lozada as possessing the necessary experience to deal with the “crisis,” the MNR was confident of placing first in the polls.

Paz Zamora was yet again his party’s presidential candidate. Early on, MIR pursued different pre-electoral alliances. Paz Zamora actively courted an alliance with MBL, in large measure because of the small party’s strong presence in Bolivia’s southern departments of Chuquisaca, Tarija, and Potosí—regions increasingly important for any electoral victory. By 14 January, however, MBL had signed a formal agreement with the MNR. As late as mid-March, there also existed the possibility of a new ADN-MIR alliance.<sup>239</sup> In the end, however, MIR went to the polls only with its usual ally, FRI, but this time campaigning officially as MIR-FRI. The platform included Carlos Saavedra as its vice presidential candidate.

The neopopulist UCS entered the campaign openly allied with the Bolivian Falange and campaigning officially as UCS-FSB. The move took the party further to the right, though it retained its populist rhetoric. Its presidential candidate was Johnny Fernández, who had inherited both his father’s wealth and his political party. He was joined by a former CNN reporter and then-ambassador to the United States, Marlene Fernández Del Granado. Throughout its campaign, UCS would be plagued by a financial scandal—based on the refusal of the Fernández family to pay nearly \$10 million in back taxes—that threatened

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<sup>239</sup> The potential alliance would have nominated Paz Zamora as the presidential candidate, with Tito Hoz de Vila as the vice presidential candidate—in effect, the reversal of the 1993 AP formula.

Johnny Fernández' legal status as a potential candidate. The faction of Condepa loyal to Remedios Loza also later joined the USC-FSB campaign.<sup>240</sup>

The 2002 election also saw NFR's independent debut. The party had played an important role in the 1997 ADN-NFR-PDC electoral coalition, effectively putting the Reyes Villa political machine to work for Banzer. The rise of Reyes Villa parallels the rise of Evo Morales and merits some brief attention. A former army captain (with ties to García Meza), Reyes Villa had been mayor of Cochabamba almost continuously since 1992, when he was elected under ADN's banner.<sup>241</sup> While Reyes Villa built his own political vehicle (he also ran for mayor under MBL's banner in 1993 and 1995), he consolidated his grip on the city of Cochabamba. Like Morales, Reyes Villa's political life was in large part made possible by Participación Popular. Through the municipalization reforms, Reyes Villa's control over municipal resources—in the country's third largest city—gave him a tremendous amount of local patronage with which to build an efficient, modern, city political machine.

Despite NFR's ties to the Banzer-Quiroga regime, Reyes Villa was fairly insulated from the *guerra del agua* fallout. As mayor of Cochabamba, he had publicly opposed the proposal to privatize the water utility (SEMAPA), for which he was excluded from the government. Additionally, prior to the actual conflict in Cochabamba, Reyes Villa had stepped down from municipal office and announced a (provisional) political retirement after

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<sup>240</sup> Leadership of Condepa party had been bitterly contested between Veronica Palenque (Carlos Palenque's daughter), Remedios Loza (his on-air partner), and Mónica Medina de Palenque (his ex-wife). The pyrrhic victory went to Veronica Palenque.

<sup>241</sup> Though Participación Popular did not go into effect until 1995, department capitals had their own municipal governments (though with more limited resources) since 1985. Reyes Villa was part of the AP (as a member of ADN) municipal electoral list in 1991; a municipal institutional crisis led to him assuming the mayorship as a compromise candidate.

the accidental death of his daughter. Thus, Reyes Villa—who had directed Cochabamba for more than a decade—was able to avoid blame for the episode. Instead, the mishandling of the security situation was blamed primarily on Condepa and UCS, virtually eliminating any local competition. By 2002, Reyes Villa was, ironically, considered a favorite candidate.

NFR also entered 2002 as a pre-electoral coalition of various political forces. To bolster his urban political machine, Reyes Villa reached out to numerous rural community leaders. A surprising move was his alliance with Alejo Véliz, who would go on to be elected as a uninominal deputy. Other important allies included René Joaquino (the popular mayor of Potosí) and Ivo Kuljis, who was named the vice presidential candidate. These alliances showed the wide net Reyes Villa was casting. Véliz was a long-time syndicalist who had participated in the Communist-dominated IU. Joaquino had most recently been elected to the Potosí municipal government from the moderate Socialist Party. In contrast, Kuljis, a member of the new Santa Cruz business elite, had been on the ticket for any populist party that would take him: UCS in 1993, Condepa in 1997, and NFR in 2002. This motley alliance gave Reyes Villa substantial ideological flexibility. He could campaign on his record as the charismatic mayor of Cochabamba, adopt a national-popular and mildly anti-neoliberal rhetoric, and still position as a “safe” candidate. By April, Reyes Villa had a healthy lead in the polls and announced that he was confident of winning “more than 50 percent of the vote” (*El Deber* 2002b).

Another independent 2002 presidential debut was that of Evo Morales and MAS. From its base in the Chapare municipalities, and by building relationships with various social movements—particularly in the wake of the *guerra del agua*—MAS had in a short time become an important national presence. Still, the campaign started to a rocky start. MAS had named José Antonio Quiroga (nephew of the famed socialist leader, Marcelo Quiroga Santa

Cruz) as Morales' running mate—only to have the surprised famous scion declare that he had no intention of being the MAS vice presidential candidate only hours later. In his place, MAS then named Antonio Peredo, a journalist and long-time Communist Party member whose younger brother had died fighting alongside Che Guevara. Despite its rural syndicalist base, the party's list of candidates was dominated by figures from the Trotskyite and Communist intelligentsia, such as the *porista* Filemon Escobar and Manuel Morales Dávila.

MIP also made its electoral debut in 2002. Felipe Quispe, who was both party leader and executive secretary of the CSUTCB, was the party's presidential candidate. Like MAS, MIP had little hope at the start of the campaign of winning more than a handful of parliamentary seats. Quispe also at first sought an alliance with MAS. His stated objective was to nominate a Quechua candidate who could expand MIP's appeal beyond the predominantly-Aymara Titicaca region. After that fell through, Quispe (an Aymara) nominated Esther Balboa, a European-educated Quechua sociologist as his vice presidential candidate.

The rest of the field included the Socialist Party (PS) led once more by Jerjes Justiniano (though he did not run for president) and a Condepa faction led by Veronica Palenque (who also did not run for president). The other two presidential candidates included René Blattmann and Alberto Costa Obregón. Blattman, the onetime 1993 MNR presidential candidate, now led his own La Paz-based middle class civic movement (Movimiento Ciudadano para el Cambio, MCC) but had only small expectations. Costa Obregón, a popular La Paz judge, campaigned early on with the single-issue platform: the promise of a constituent assembly. Interestingly, this single issue resonated with voters and Costa Obregón's Libertad y Justicia (LyJ) was a surprise early front-runner. By March, however, with the large parties in full campaign, Costa Obregón fell in the polls.

## The Electoral Campaign

The 2002 campaign showed the established political party system in crisis. Even before the campaigns were under way, Jorge Lazarte (2002), a former head of the Corte Nacional Electoral, pronounced the end of the tripartite system.<sup>242</sup> The *desgaste político* (“political attrition”) of the Banzer-Quiroga regime in the face of growing social unrest and the economic doldrums colored much of the campaign. In some ways, the electoral climate was similar to 1985. Of the parties with a chance at the presidency, only the MNR openly defended the neoliberal economic system. This time, a number of substantive issues—especially the question of constitutional reforms and the introduction of direct democracy through referendums—took center stage. As in previous elections, no candidate was expected to win a majority and a great deal of media attention again went to speculating potential post-electoral alliances. The bitterness of the campaign, however, would make it very difficult for the systemic parties to come together in the face of the first serious threat to their hegemony. That threat was Evo Morales, a staunchly anti-systemic candidate who finished a surprising second place—making him the first non-systemic candidate with a chance at the presidency.

“Crisis” was the defining characteristic of the 2002 presidential campaign. There was a widespread consensus (both among the media and the parties) that the country was in a

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<sup>242</sup> Lazarte described Bolivia’s party system as a “three plus four” system resting on a “tripod” of three major parties (MNR, ADN, and MIR) and several minor parties. In this system, any of the two major parties could govern together, but never all three. Lazarte also argued that Bolivian politics depended on this tripod and that its end signaled the end of the party system. Speculating about the election’s outcome, he prophetically suggested that any anti-systemic alliance would be “fatal” and that any government elected “most likely would not last five years.”

state of political and economic crisis, and that the two were related. The economic decline that began during the Banzer-Quiroga administration was not called a recession or a slump; it was simply referred to as the economic crisis (*la crisis económica*).<sup>243</sup> Even systemic candidates fit their campaigns to the theme of crisis by both pronouncing their technical expertise and promising to manage the economic crisis. This was particularly strong in the MNR campaign, which attacked nearly all the parties that belonged to *la mega* as responsible for the crisis. Such attacks were particularly aimed at MIR. In response, Paz Zamora, who had participated in two governments (1989-1993 and 1997-2002) proclaimed that he “was never a neoliberal” and that his 1989-1993 AP government “was one of resistance to the neoliberal model, that’s why Sánchez de Lozada ... said they were four lost years” (*La Razón* 2002d).<sup>244</sup> The MNR’s attack against members of *la mega* was risky, however, since Sánchez de Lozada was still the person most closely associated with the neoliberal model. He was frequently called a *vendepatria* (“one who sells out the fatherland”)—a term that echoes the post-Chaco rhetoric, especially *entreguista*—by various candidates and their supporters for his government’s Capitalization Law, which had privatized several state-owned industries.

The theme of crisis also extended to the coverage of the political parties themselves, which were portrayed as internally divided. A great deal of press attention was paid to the disintegration of Condepa, after what can only be described as a three-way inheritance dispute between Remedios Loza, Veronica Palenque, and Monica Medina de Palenque. Several candidates were also accused of being *transfugios*, as they left one party for another.

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<sup>243</sup> One of the few exceptions was president Jorge Quiroga, who frequently pronounced the Bolivian economy as “solid” in public.

<sup>244</sup> The quote references much earlier, but often-repeated statements by Sánchez de Lozada, who argued that the AP government did not further the neoliberal reforms initiated by the 1985-1989 MNR government and were, therefore, “lost years.”



The most noted of these was Ivo Kuljis, who had run on a presidential ticket three times for three different parties. Two other incidents had dramatic effects on confidence in political parties and politicians. One was the tax scandal that plagued UCS, which was increasingly seen as little more than a vehicle for the Fernández family's political (and economic) ambitions. The other was a hostage crisis that almost cost MIR its place on the ballot. Hours before the deadline to submit its list of candidates, a group loyal to Gastón Encinas closed off MIR party headquarters with several hostages and demanded that Encinas be included on the party's list of candidates. When the gambit failed, Encinas publicly broke with MIR and formed an alliance with UCS, which nominated him for a Chuquisaca senate seat. Such events contributed to eroding confidence in the democratic legitimacy of political parties and suggested that many politicians were mostly interested in securing personal power.

Public discontent with the party system was captured by Costa Obregón, particularly in metropolitan La Paz and El Alto. The independent judge campaigned on the single issue of calling for a constituent assembly to “refound” the nation; additionally, he proposed ending the electoral monopoly enjoyed by political parties and the introduction of popular referendums. By January, he was the front-runner in several newspaper polls. Though a parliamentary commission was already engaged in drafting a series of constitutional amendments, Costa Obregón argued that these did not go far enough. By March, other candidates had taken up the constituent assembly issue. These included Paz Zamora, who on 1 March publicly signed a document in the city of El Alto promising to call a constituent assembly within 150 days if he was elected president. Soon after, Evo Morales and Manfred Reyes Villa also announced their support for a constituent assembly. The two parties most strongly opposed to a constituent assembly were the MNR and PDC, which cited the

“unconstitutionality” of the proposal.<sup>245</sup> Benjamin Miguel Harb (PDC) called the assembly a “smokescreen” for avoiding concrete policy proposals, which should be dealt in parliament (*La Prensa* 2002d). But by mid-March, even the MNR had softened its opposition to the constituent assembly. As a single-issue candidate, Costa Obregón soon fell in the polls.

As in 1997, bilateral relations with the United States played an important role in the campaign. Reporters from *El Deber*, a Santa Cruz newspaper, put the issue of travel visas to the United States forward to several party leaders in January. The respondents (from UCS, NFR, MNR, MIR, and ADN) each agreed that it was important for Bolivia to enjoy good relations with the US, and most made sure to point out that they would go over their candidate lists carefully to ensure that none of their potential candidates faced US travel sanctions (*El Deber* 2002c). In contrast, Evo Morales frequently made favorable references to Washington’s disapproval of him. The issue became extremely significant in the last days of the race, after the US ambassador to Bolivia, Manuel Rocha, suggested that Washington would suspend foreign aid to Bolivia if it elected a candidate tied to “drug dealers and terrorists” (*La Razón* 2002f). That statement solidified Morales’ standing as the *anti yanqui* candidate—which conventional wisdom accepted as a significant factor in Morales surpassing his standing in public opinion polls.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Before the 2005 amendments, the Bolivian constitution did not allow for a constituent assembly; changes to the constitution could be made, but only by parliament.

<sup>246</sup> There is no way to know for sure, of course, whether Morales outperformed the polls (which only gave him 13.0% of the national vote compared to his 20.94% of the valid vote) because of Rocha’s statement, or whether there is another explanation. There are other alternatives to consider. First, Morales had been steadily gaining in the polls during the last month of the campaign; much of the surge during the last week (the poll was conducted two weeks before the election) could be due to this momentum. Second, Bolivian pre-electoral polls are known for their methodological problems—particularly their over-sampling of urban voters (often, they

Much of the campaign focused on the bitter rivalry between Sánchez de Lozada and Reyes Villa, the two commonly-accepted front-runners. The MNR campaign ran a series of negative ads attacking Reyes Villa on various fronts. In one he was accused of instigating the Cochabamba *guerra del agua* and even for rampant diarrhea in the city's poor children. The Reyes Villa campaign tried to either ignore or denounce the attack ads, but these soon began to take their toll.<sup>247</sup> Additionally, other candidates also went on the offensive against Reyes Villa, who was seen as the most serious “outsider” threat to the establishment. In April, the NFR candidate was leading in the polls; by May, he was slowly slipping. Besides purely personal attacks, Reyes Villa was also attacked because of his checkered past. Throughout the campaign he was unable to satisfactorily address several problem issues, including his past involvement in military regimes (he had been Luis García Meza's personal bodyguard), his alleged ties to the Moonies, and even gaffes involving his business partners.<sup>248</sup>

Though there were several multi-candidate debates throughout the campaign, the major events were again principally limited to the major parties. The televised debate hosted by the La Paz press association included only three candidates: Sánchez de Lozada, Reyes Villa, and Paz Zamora. By then, it was clear that ADN was in sharp decline; NFR was seen as a replacement. As in previous elections, the candidates did not address each other directly and primarily relied on their campaign slogans. Both Reyes Villa and Paz Zamora again

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only sample urban voters)—which could account for the difference (most of the votes for Morales were cast in rural areas).

<sup>247</sup> Most of the Reyes Villa television spots focused on his popular image and his lengthy tenure as mayor of Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city.

<sup>248</sup> The latter gaffe stemmed from an accusation by Johnny Fernández that Reyes Villa was not the sole owner of Marevi Internacional, but that he had an illegal German business partner. Reyes Villa denied “ever having worked with any German” but later was forced to acknowledge that the business partner in question, Reinhold Hacker Bielefeldt, was his father-in-law.

attacked the neoliberal model, though each offered only modest reforms.<sup>249</sup> In contrast, Sánchez de Lozada appealed to his experience in managing economic crisis, defended the successes of his first term in government, and argued that the “only way to improve capitalization is to make Goni president” (*Opinión* 2002a).

The left was again marginalized. But in contrast to the systemic parties, the left was now making concerted efforts to unify under a single banner. As early as January, a debate hosted by the departmental labor federation of Cochabamba (COD-Cochabamba) invited a series of speakers, including many former candidates for leftist parties. The guests gave a series of speeches outlining their common political objectives, most frequently including references to the “historical national struggle” from colonialism, through the Chaco War, and into the current period (*Opinión* 2002b). Unlike previous attempts at unifying the anti-neoliberal left, various rural and sectoral *sindicatos* (rather than ideological parties) led the effort. Most of the organized syndicalist labor movement soon backed the MAS campaign. By then, the key issues in the MAS campaign were a demand for an immediate constituent assembly, a halt to the US-led coca eradication program initiated by Banzer, and the re-nationalization of the newly privatized state industries. More than any other anti-neoliberal candidate, Evo Morales appealed to a broad portion of the electorate—particularly rural and urban poor—whose socioeconomic situation had steadily deteriorated.<sup>250</sup> In contrast to

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<sup>249</sup> Earlier in the campaign, both had taken less modest positions. Reyes Villa had called for the nationalization of the country’s natural gas reserves and Paz Zamora had called for the re-establishment of the YPFB state monopoly on hydrocarbons. See *Juguete Rabioso* 2002. During the debate, Reyes Villa reversed his position substantially, stating that he would not revise capitalization of state industries “to avoid losing the government’s faith [and credit]” but would improve the state’s oversight. See *Opinión* 2002a.

<sup>250</sup> The contrast between Morales and Felipe Quispe (MIP) was particularly stark. While the latter purposefully appealed almost exclusively to indigenous voters (particularly, Aymara voters), Morales did not campaign as an

many of the previous leftist candidates who had campaigned under orthodox socialist platforms, Morales' platform reflected the post-Chaco state-corporatist discourse that had been supplanted since 1985 by the liberal-pluralist discourse.

## **Electoral Results**

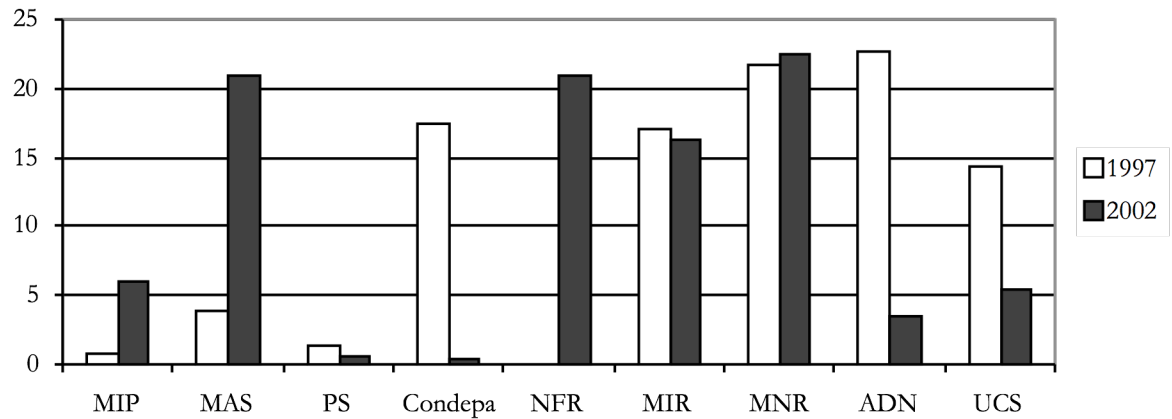
The 30 June 2002 general election showed a broad dispersion of votes across four presidential candidates and the near-collapse of the systemic party system (see Figure 6.3). Though Sánchez de Lozada was the plurality winner with 22.46% of the valid vote, the share was slightly worse than Banzer's 1997 vote share and more than ten points worse than his 1993 plurality victory. The real surprise of the election was Morales' second place showing, with 20.94% of the valid vote— inching past Reyes Villa (20.91%). Though voter turnout had picked up slightly (to 72.06%), more voters had abstained from the polls than had voted for the plurality winner. The aggregate share of votes for the three systemic parties was only 42.17% of the total valid vote, marking the first time the systemic parties had not won at least half of the total vote. In contrast, the two largest non-systemic parties (MAS and NFR) together won 41.85% of the total valid vote. The effective number of electoral parties remained effectively the same as in 1997, with 5.8 effective parties. Finally, the share of blank votes increased (to 4.36%) while the number of null votes decreased slightly (to 2.82%).

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“indigenous” candidate, but rather as a rural syndicalist leader. Thus, Morales was able to appeal to a wider variety of voters (including urban *cholos* and *mestizos*) than MIP could.

Figure 6.3

Change in support for parties between 1997 and 2002, as percent of valid vote



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. MAS figures for 1997 reflect IU. MIP figures for 1997 reflect Eje-Pachakuti. MNR figures for 1997 reflect both MNR and MBL.

The 2002 election was clearly a turning point in Bolivian politics. First, the party system that had evolved since 1985 was effectively shattered. While the MNR and MIR were able to retain much of their national presence, ADN was virtually eliminated. In contrast, two new parties—both of which had positioned themselves as anti-systemic parties—emerged in second and third place in their electoral debuts. And unlike the earlier populist parties (including NFR), one of these (MAS) reflected an organized social movement with strong leadership structures. Sánchez de Lozada's plurality victory was the lowest plurality victory of any Bolivian democratic election; and he had only slightly improved from Durán's lackluster 1997 performance. Paz Zamora finished fourth, marking MIR's continued decline. Second, 2002 saw the most regionally polarized election to date (see Table 6.4). Though the MNR and MAS each won four departments, these corresponded to marked geopolitical division. Even fourth-placed MIR easily retained its stronghold in Tarija. Evo Morales' second-place finish was primarily driven by his strong support in La Paz and Cochabamba,

two of the country's most populous departments; MAS had only minimal presence across the *media luna*.

Table 6.4

Percent of valid votes for lead 2002 presidential candidates, by department

	Sánchez de Lozada (MNR)	Evo Morales (MAS)	Reyes Villa (NFR)	Paz Zamora (MIR)
La Paz	15.32	<b>22.49</b>	20.98	11.49
Cochabamba	16.90	<b>37.62</b>	29.05	6.15
Oruro	18.75	<b>29.23</b>	18.48	15.35
Potosí	24.32	<b>27.02</b>	14.52	17.85
Chuquisaca	<b>26.88</b>	17.10	15.65	17.27
Tarija	33.76	6.16	10.49	<b>39.31</b>
Santa Cruz	<b>29.47</b>	10.21	22.40	24.86
Beni	<b>42.64</b>	3.16	11.65	16.88
Pando	<b>34.45</b>	2.93	12.10	20.00
National	22.46	20.94	20.91	16.32

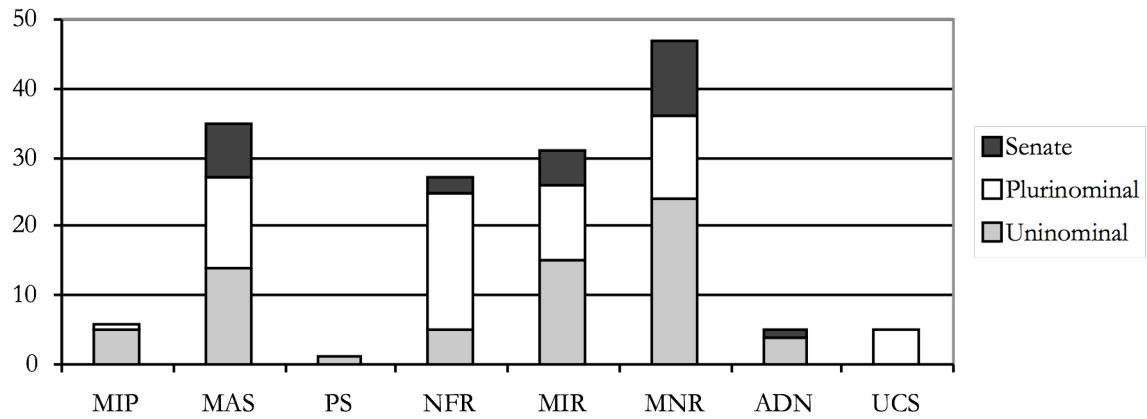
Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral; department winners in bold.

A total of eight parties won parliamentary seats, though PS had a minimal presence with a single uninominal seat (won by Jerjes Justiniano).<sup>251</sup> The effective number of legislative parties declined slightly (to 5.0). This reflected a relatively equal dispersion between four large parties and three smaller ones. This time, however, two of the large parties were not systemic parties and accounted for nearly half of the total seats. Aggregate disproportionality of seats to votes also remained little changed, with a slight increase (to 0.053); differences across departments were again mixed.

<sup>251</sup> Though PS did not pass the 3% electoral threshold, a special provision in the electoral guaranteed parties their uninominal seats.

Figure 6.4

Legislative seats by party, 2002



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

More than any previous election, 2002 demonstrated strong opposition to continued neoliberal economic policies—particularly across Andean departments. The systemic parties had minimal presence in the city of El Alto and across much of the Altiplano in La Paz, Oruro, and Potosí. There, voters cast their ballots in decisive numbers for MAS and MIP, which split the rural countryside. MAS dominated the Cochabamba countryside, as well as the cordillera valleys—its showing in Santa Cruz was due principally to its strong presence in new immigrant rural communities in the frontier with Cochabamba. NFR, in contrast, was almost entirely an urban phenomenon—anchored in the city of Cochabamba. In large measure, the ADN's collapse can be correlated to the success of NFR, which seemed to capture many former ADN urban centers.

Uninominal votes also played a significant role in 2002. This time, both parties and the media paid considerable attention to uninominal races across the country. Unlike 1997, when many parties had recruited musicians, athletes, comedians, and other popular figures



into their uninominal lists, this time they actively recruited known local political and civic leaders. Again, we see here the imprint of Participación Popular. More than seven years after the municipalization reforms, a new generation of locally tested political leaders was available for recruitment. With the exception of NFR and UCS, most parties won more uninominal seats than plurinominal seats. ADN surpassed its proportional seat share in Beni and Pando. The most successful uninominal party was MIR, which won all five uninominal seats in Tarija; it was followed closely by the MNR, which won nine of the eleven uninominal seats in Santa Cruz (its candidates placed close second in the remaining two). In 2002 parties used uninominal candidates strategically to deepen and consolidate their regional strongholds. The move pulled parties closer to local bases—but at the cost of pushing them away from broader “national” constituencies.

This is clearly seen in the 2002 division between Andean and *media luna* departments. If we use votes as an indication of support or opposition to neoliberal policies, we find a stark difference across both regions. No political figure in Bolivia’s democratic history is more closely tied to neoliberalism than Sánchez de Lozada. Yet he won pluralities (of at least 30%) in nearly every municipality in the *media luna*. In fact, support for the MNR in those constituencies had remained little changed to the party’s high water mark in 1993. Despite its success at recruiting uninominal candidates in Santa Cruz, the MNR was distancing itself from voters in the Altiplano. The result was the clear formation of distinct, regional party systems. Politics in the *media luna* remained little changed from 1985 until 2002. Meanwhile, a significant political dealignment was taking place across Andean Bolivia.

## Government Formation

As in previous elections, no candidate won an absolute majority and parliament was called to select a president. Unlike in 1993 and 1997, however, a coalition government was uncertain. In part, the delay was caused by a closely disputed second place—votes for Reyes Villa and Morales were so close (the final difference was 721 votes) that it was unclear which of the two would mark parliament's second option for the presidency, after Sánchez de Lozada. During the month of July, Sánchez de Lozada and the MNR courted other parties in hopes of securing his election to the presidency. In many ways, the attempt to build a working coalition looked much like efforts in 1989 or even 1985, rather than those of 1993 or 1997. In other ways the situation was even more difficult because the legislative seats were so widely dispersed among several parties, including parties (MAS and MIP) who expressed no interest in working with any systemic parties.

So long as Reyes Villa was a potential presidential candidate, the MNR was unable to secure the necessary legislative support for its candidate. And because of its opposition during the campaign to a constituent assembly, many of the remaining political parties were unwilling to back Sánchez de Lozada. The prize, of course, was MIR. It was clear that Paz Zamora was not a contender for the presidency (he placed fourth), but his party's 31 parliamentary seats were crucial—both for electing a president and maintaining any government coalition. MIR clearly had the “key” presidential palace—and Paz Zamora made it clear that he would keep that key in his pocket as long as possible (*La Razón* 2002c).

Throughout July every party (including MAS) openly courted MIR's parliamentary support.

The situation did not improve much once it was clear that parliament would have to choose between Sánchez de Lozada and Morales. While it was quite certain that parliament would not choose the MAS candidate, the MNR was unable to build the necessary support

for a coalition government. As early as 8 July, UCS and ADN had announced their support for an MNR-led government, but their support was far short of a parliamentary majority. By 11 July, Sánchez de Lozada appealed the other parties to support a “convergence” and declared that his government “would not be limited only to traditional parties, the doors are open” (*Los Tiempos* 2002b). In response, Paz Zamora even suggested an MNR-MAS alliance and declared that his party would help “guarantee governability” but was not yet prepared to join a coalition (*La Prensa* 2002c). MIR and NFR continued to threaten to cast blank ballots in the parliamentary round of voting. In part, the stalemate was prolonged because an impasse would make Sánchez de Lozada president by default—if parliament did not elect a candidate after two consecutive votes, the plurality winner would constitutionally be declared the new president.

Sánchez de Lozada hoped to avoid such an outcome at all costs. The inability to secure his parliamentary election would be a serious blow to his presidential mandate. It would also leave him without a majority coalition in government, making him the first minority president since the 1982-1985 UDP government—an experience he did not wish to repeat. On 22 July, an exasperated Sánchez de Lozada demanded that NFR and MIR vote for one of the two candidates and not “wash their hands” (*El Deber* 2002a). Throughout the month, there were hints of a possible reconciliation between the MNR and NFR—though Reyes Villa demanded apologies for the harsh personal attacks against him during the campaign. Some members of NFR, led by Ivo Kuljis, publicly backed an MNR-led government by late July (*La Razón* 2002a), though they were opposed by the “radical” bloc led by Alejo Véliz (*Los Tiempos* 2002a).

In the end, Sánchez de Lozada and Paz Zamora signed a “Plan Bolivia” agreement on 26 July. The agreement was highly controversial. The document excluded many of MIR’s

campaign promises—in particular, calls for a constituent assembly and the introduction of referendum democracy. In exchange for its parliamentary support, however, MIR received seven (of 18) cabinet posts and four (of nine) department prefectures: La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Tarija. While Jorge Quiroga applauded the pact, Evo Morales accused the US embassy of orchestrating the MNR-MIR alliance. Nevertheless, the alliance gave Sánchez de Lozada a narrow parliamentary majority (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5  
Government and opposition parliamentary strength, 2002

	Uninominal Deputies	Plurinominal Deputies	Senate	Total
Government parties	43	28	17	88
<i>MNR-MBL</i>	24	12	11	47
<i>MIR</i>	15	11	5	31
<i>ADN</i>	4		1	5
<i>UCS</i>		5		5
Opposition parties	24	34	10	69
<i>NFR</i>	5	20	2	27
<i>MAS</i>	14	13	8	35
<i>MIP</i>	5	1		6
<i>PS</i>	1			1

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

There were clear problems with the new MNR-led alliance. The alliance was the first government to represent less than a majority of the valid vote (the aggregate vote for alliance parties was 47.69%). The new government also included for the first time all three systemic parties. In all previous governments, at least one systemic party did not enter the coalition government, which meant that at least one of the opposition parties was vested in the existing political and economic institutional framework. The 2002 election, however,

produced a parliamentary opposition composed entirely of new, anti-system political parties. At least two of these parties (MAS and MIP) were also staunchly “anti-political” and did not distinguish between formal and informal politics—they were as likely to take their grievances to “the street” as they were to engage in debate in parliament. The result was a convergence of traditional parties, which had to overcome two decades of mistrust and competition, against a powerful anti-systemic congressional bloc. In short, for the first time since the 1982-1985 UDP government, the ideological “distance” between the government and opposition was wide.

### **An Overview of the Second Institutional Period**

This second period saw two contradictory trends. On the one hand, the formal institutional political process was increasingly decentralized after the 1993-1997 reforms. Both the devolution of state authority to municipal governments and the election of local parliamentary representatives were significant steps toward strengthening and deepening Bolivian democracy. On the other hand, this institutional period saw a sharp decline in support for traditional parties. The effective number of parties increased dramatically, as votes were spread thinly between more parties. This period also witnessed a dramatic regionalization and polarization of the party system and the formation of distinct regional party *systems*. While support for the systemic parties declined across the country, this decline was most pronounced in Andean departments. In *media luna* departments, nearly three quarters of the voters continued to support the MNR, ADN, and MIR. In contrast, support for systemic parties steadily declined across the Andean departments, noticed most sharply in the rural Altiplano and the city of El Alto.

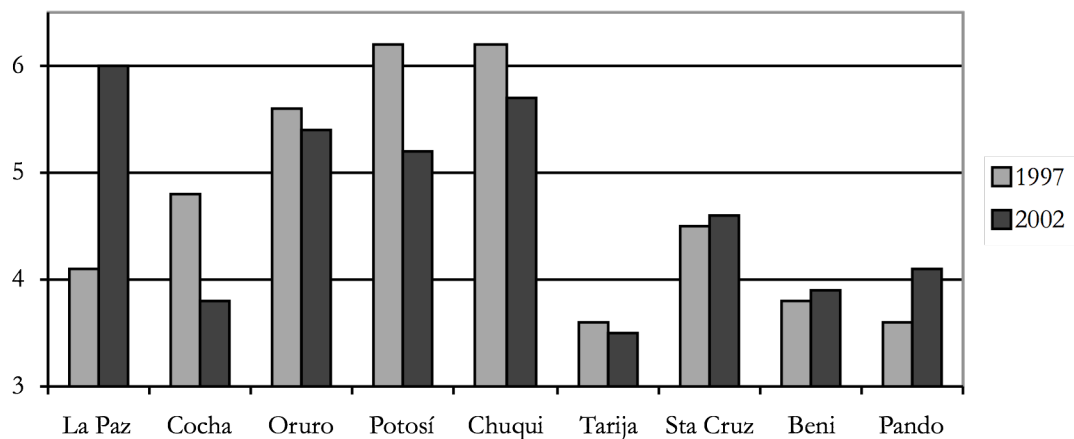
The decline in support for systemic parties was not accompanied by a structured shift in support to other alternatives. As Figure 6.5 shows, the effective number of electoral parties varied significantly between Andean and *media luna* departments. Thus the shift away from support for systemic parties across Andean departments is best understood as a political “dealignment.” A notable exception is Cochabamba, which did see a reduction in the effective number of parties as political competition in that department concentrated on a new MAS-NFR bipolarity (the two parties captured two thirds of the departmental vote in 2002). Otherwise, the effective number of parties was much higher in Andean departments than in the *media luna*. While in *media luna* departments the traditional party system continued to dominate—or was even concentrated into new MNR-ADN and MNR-MIR bipolarities—most Andean departments instead saw high fractionalized, inchoate party systems in which the traditional parties were being joined (but not yet “crowded out”) by other electoral alternatives.

The lack of any consistent, structured support for an alternative political vehicle across Andean Bolivia meant that presidential contest were now concentrated around those candidates with strong support in the *media luna*. In 2002, of the 43 deputies elected from the four *media luna* departments, all but seven (83.7%) represented government coalition parties and all twelve of the region’s senators were elected by coalition member parties. In contrast, only 35 of the 87 (58.6%) deputies elected from Andean departments were belonged to government coalition parties. More and more, the regions of the country that were most discontent with systemic politicians were becoming less relevant for the purposes of government formation. In 2002, for the first time, a Bolivian president was inaugurated without much popular support in two of the country’s most populous departments: La Paz

and Cochabamba.<sup>252</sup> As Sánchez de Lozada took office for the second time in 2002, more than two-thirds of the voters in La Paz and Cochabamba had cast their votes for anti-systemic opposition parties.

Figure 6.5

Effective number of electoral parties by department, 1997 and 2002



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

In hindsight, the October 2003 crisis was predictable (if not preventable). The second Sánchez de Lozada government lacked broad social and political support and faced an openly hostile opposition. By 2002, it was evident that the traditional party system in place since 1985 was effectively shattered. The next three years would usher a series of dramatic political developments that would radically transform Bolivian politics and lead to a (potential) realignment based—in large measure—on the same regional cleavages and geopolitical divisions that emerged between 1997 and 2002.

<sup>252</sup> In Cochabamba, only 29.01% of total votes cast were cast for the coalition parties (MNR, MIR, UCS, ADN). In La Paz, the figure was 31.81%

### **Elite Consensus Under Siege**

While the first institutional period (1985-1993) saw the formation of a new elite consensus around liberal-pluralist political discourse, this second period (1993-2002) saw a slow erosion of these values. Of course, as late as 1997 the elite consensus was still dominant and the electoral campaign—perhaps even more so than in 1993—reflected the values of that consensus. Bolivia’s “democracy on stilts” seemed fairly stable, with a relatively congenial elite striding along, competing within a very limited and proscribed policy space. By 2002, anti-systemic forces were strongly challenging this elite consensus. Ironically, it was the very reforms made by liberal-pluralist elites—reforms meant to improve the quality of representative structures and “deepen” Bolivia’s democracy—that provided the institutional spaces and resources with which to challenge the established political elite. Often, these subaltern groups would invert the liberal-pluralist discourse by emphasizing their own “otherness,” using the tools of the elite discourse against a political, social, and economic system that still retained many inequalities of power. In other ways, these anti-systemic challengers also reverted back to an earlier discourse tradition: post-Chaco state-corporatism.

An irony of the 1993-2002 period is that, despite reforms meant to improve the representative institutions of Bolivia’s democracy, the political class—at the national level—became even more separated from popular opinion. Bolivia’s democracy on stilts became even more elevated from the street below. It is not clear whether this liberal-pluralist consensus was ever grounded in a similar society-wide consensus. It is clear, however, that by 2002, voters were quickly moving away from political parties that represented that consensus. While many voters—particularly in rural and urban-poor La Paz—had voted for populist parties since the early 1990s, by 2002 they were voting in overwhelming numbers



for parties that explicitly represented an alternate policy program that rejected the core of the liberal-pluralist consensus: neoliberalism.

Yet another irony is the growing regional polarization within Bolivia. The liberal-pluralist discourse had, in principle, hoped to bridge the ethnic, cultural, and regional differences between Bolivians. To do this, however, it abandoned the earlier post-Chaco integrationist national discourse in favor of a discourse that openly acknowledged and celebrated the country's ethnic, cultural, and regional diversity. One clear effect of the policy was that it encouraged ethno-cultural political movements, such as the Aymara *katarista* organizations of the Altiplano. Rather than as *campesinos*, the Bolivian state now regarded them as members of *comunidades indígenas* ("indigenous communities") or *pueblos originarios* ("original peoples"). Of course, this encouraged other groups as well: Lowland indigenous groups, long marginalized by the Bolivian state. Efforts to coordinate the various indigenous movements proved increasingly difficult. Instead, a growing number of different ethno-cultural demands were placed upon the state, which often had to intervene in inter-group disputes.

A principal result of this regional polarization, of course, was that it actually distanced the Bolivian elite from a large segment of the population. Because voters in the *media luna* continued to support the systemic parties, political power was increasingly concentrating in the *media luna*. And because these regions were also ethno-culturally different from Andean departments, the Bolivian state could, by 2002, be described as dominated by one ethno-cultural group at the expense of others. Increasingly, the (mostly rural and poor) Andean indigenous communities saw themselves dominated by a regional elite. From the Andean indigenous point of view, it was difficult to see Bolivia as a democratic polity. After all, by 2002 a substantial segment of the Andean population was

consistently voting for electoral “losers.” This made them, in practice, a permanent political minority. The reality of Bolivian politics by 2002 was that the country was divided and one half of the country (the economically prosperous and less indigenous half) governed.

This was the Bolivia that Sánchez de Lozada—an American-educated, established systemic political figure who spoke Spanish with an English accent—took control of on 6 August 2002. After a contentious electoral campaign in which he had been rejected by an overwhelming majority of Andean voters, Sánchez de Lozada promised to begin a new series of neoliberal reforms. By 2002, however, the elite consensus was in a state of siege. Yet the elite seemed blind to the full danger of the situation. Despite the increasing social tensions evident since 2000, the first task of the coalition members was to squabble over patronage resources. At the twilight of Bolivia’s two-decade-long experiment with parliamentarized presidentialism, the established political class jockeyed for position among themselves. They seemed little aware that their stilts were about to be kicked out from under them.

## CHAPTER 7

### **DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS: 2002-2005**

The 2005 elections followed a period of considerable political instability and crisis. On 17 October 2003, more than a month of social unrest in the capital city of La Paz—accompanied by total collapse of central state authority in the city of El Alto and the surrounding Altiplano countryside—culminated in the resignation and self-imposed exile of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, elected only a year before. The next day, vice president Carlos Mesa—an independent historian and former television news anchor selected as Sánchez de Lozada’s running mate in the 2002 election—assumed the office of the presidency. This marked the first time a civilian president was forced out of office since 1980 (when Lydia Gueiler Tejada was overthrown by García Meza). October 2003 also effectively swept away the political system in place since 1985. Twenty months later, Mesa himself stepped down in the midst of popular pressure, and bypassed the constitutional line of succession to hand power over to Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé, a little-known constitutional lawyer who headed the Bolivian Supreme Court. Rodríguez Veltzé’s first act was to call for new elections. Although the 2005 election operated under the same institutional rules as the 1997 and 2002 elections, the acute political crisis that preceded it fundamentally altered its dynamics.

This chapter does not pretend to provide a detailed history or analysis of the Bolivian crisis (the so-called *guerra del gas* or “gas war”). Such a work stands outside the scope of this dissertation, which explicitly focuses on electoral politics and covers a much broader time period. Nevertheless, a brief understanding of the affect of the *guerra del gas* is essential to understand the 2005 election. One key difference in post-2003 politics was that the sharp

regional polarization of 2002 was consolidating into a notable two-bloc national system. Yet this two-bloc system did not preference any of the earlier systemic parties—despite the continued (relative) popularity of key systemic politicians in important parts of the country. In 2005, and for the first time, none of the systemic parties were expected to do well. Only the MNR fielded a presidential candidate. Instead, the de facto “systemic” candidate, Jorge Quiroga, eschewed his own ADN to instead build a new political vehicle. Thus, while the formal institutional system was virtually unchanged between 2002 and 2005, the realities on the ground were powerful constraints on elite strategies.

By 2005, the post-Chaco political class had been shaken down from its stilts by a broad popular uprising. During his short tenure as president, Carlos Mesa—one of the smoothest, most articulate, and charismatic members of that political class—tried fruitlessly to court the support of “the Andean street” with visits to Altiplano communities, television addresses, and balcony performances. It was never enough. The brief 2003-2005 interlude instead saw a new anti-systemic elite jockey for position.<sup>253</sup> Evo Morales would emerge as the standard-bearer for this convergence of various social movements. The 2005 election was, therefore, in part a clash between pro-systemic and anti-systemic elites.

### **The *Guerra del Gas* and Its Impact**

The so-called *guerra del gas* was not a single, unified movement. Instead, the events of September-October 2003 usually considered in narratives of the “gas war” include a variety of indirectly related events and actors. The growing discontent and frequent popular protests

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<sup>253</sup> Like the leaders of the post-Chaco nationa-revolutionary movements, the leaders of the “new” Bolivian social movements can be considered a “new” elite. Keeping with Robert Michel’s “iron law of oligarchy,” the new social movements are also significantly controlled by a leadership structure: an organizational elite.

against the central government were not, until September-October, come together. It is a naive simplification to assume that the month-long social unrest that forced Sánchez de Lozada out of office was the product of a unified anti-neoliberal social movement. Rather, these forces represented disparate—and often bitterly divided—ad hoc collection of distinct social movements and organizations. While these shared a common opposition to Bolivia’s central government and its post-1985 political elite, their individual reasons, public demands, and ideological motives were unique. Ironically, the direct catalyst to the *guerra del gas* came from the rural indigenous movements loyal to Felipe Quispe who had little interest in the gas issue. Yet by September-October, what started as a slowly escalating rural indigenous mobilization against the central state evolved into an urban *cholo* uprising that adopted the mining-proletariat COB’s slogan: “*el gas no se vende!*”

Opposition to the Sánchez de Lozada government had steadily increased since February 2003. The events of “Black February” illustrate the combustible nature of the new social movements—particularly in metropolitan La Paz-El Alto. Like the events of October 2003, Black February also saw a convergence of different social forces that were later combined—in the popular imagination—into a single event. In this case, the catalyst was a mutiny by an elite police unit demanding higher wages.<sup>254</sup> At the same time, popular discontent with a proposed tax reform had increased the city’s political tension. On 12-13 February, a confrontation between mutinied police and military units turned violent.<sup>255</sup> The result was as many as 34 dead. The casualties were high, in large measure, because the police

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<sup>254</sup> The La Paz-based GES (Grupo Especial de Seguridad) is the Bolivian equivalent to the SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) forces. The unit has since been disbanded.

<sup>255</sup> It is still unclear who fired first. The mutinied police had taken their weapons and equipment with them, and took up positions directly across from the presidential palace; military units took up opposite positions.

mutiny was soon joined by civilian protesters—including schoolchildren—under the common banner of opposition to the proposed *impuestazo* (“tax hike”).

Additionally, members of a revitalized COB, led by Jaime Solares, had openly opposed plans by Jorge Quiroga to negotiate a new gas export deal. Popular opposition to the deal was, in large measure, driven by anti-Chilean nationalist sentiment (the plan involved exporting gas through a Chilean port). Once rumors circulated that Sánchez de Lozada planned to go ahead with the proposed export plan, the COB was able to generate substantial public support for its protests. Still, the COB protests—though nearly daily occurrences—were (until October) relatively small. Over the course of weeks, as other groups began mobilizing for various sectoral demands, Solares orchestrated a united front, calling for a general strike under the “*el gas no se vende!*” banner.

The spark that set off the September-October “gas war” had little to do with gas exports.<sup>256</sup> Instead, it involved a growing indigenous protest across the Altiplano involving highway blockades. By mid-September, much of the rural countryside outside La Paz was paralyzed. On 20 September, the government’s attempts to break the blockade and rescue hundreds of Bolivian and international tourists stranded for more than a week in the town of Warisata ended with six deaths. Press reports fueled popular outrage at what was viewed as a “massacre” of indigenous people by government forces.<sup>257</sup> Ironically, the Warisata dead soon

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<sup>256</sup> On 27 July, Edwin Huampo, an indigenous leader (allied to Felipe Quispe) arrested and helped beat to death an alleged cattle thief. After government officials arrested Huampo for murder, indigenous Aymara organizations protested; they argued that Huampo was meeting out “communal justice” and that the arrest showed the government’s disregard for indigenous rights.

<sup>257</sup> Several national and international activists have gone even further, denouncing the events of September-October as a deliberate attempted “genocide” of indigenous peoples.

became martyrs in the larger anti-gas protests—a cause they were probably little interested in themselves.

By October, anti-government movement protests included such disparate groups as the landless peasants' Movimiento Sin Tierra (MST), the miners' FSTMB, the El Alto labor syndicates (COR-El Alto), the El Alto confederation of neighborhoods (FEJUVE), various professional and trades associations (particularly public school teachers, taxi drivers, and market vendors), the rural CSUTCB, and, finally, members of MAS and the *cocalero* syndicates. While these groups often had their own intense organizational and personal leadership disputes, they could generally be characterized as anti-systemic, anti-neoliberal, and anti-government. As the protests became increasingly confrontational and as the government response became increasingly draconian (such as the declaration of martial law in El Alto on 12 October), the various groups gelled into a unified front with a singular objective: the removal of Sánchez de Lozada from office.

In many ways, the *guerra del gas* served as the building block for a broad popular movement, which was soon spearheaded by Evo Morales and MAS. This, despite the fact that Morales played a peripheral role. The gas war, however, demonstrated the formation of an “equivalential chain” (Laclau 2005). In the final analysis, the *guerra del gas* was less about opposition to a specific government policy (gas exports through Chile) but rather a rallying cry that could unite various social sectors, each with unmet demands and expectations. More than any other leader, Morales was able to capitalize on the events of September-October and act as a “signifier” from a wider set of popular expectations.

But the *guerra del gas* also produced a reaction, particularly in the *media luna*. While the La Paz middle class soon turned away from the government and (in some cases) joined in calling for the president's resignation, civic reaction in the *media luna* was radically different.

There, civic organizations—particularly the Comité Cívico pro Santa Cruz—saw the rising popular forces spreading from La Paz and El Alto as a threat. During much of September–October, the cities of La Paz and El Alto were effectively paralyzed, both by strikes and street blockades. By October, the unrest had spread to other cities, most notably Oruro and Cochabamba. Many civic leaders in Santa Cruz and other *media luna* cities declared that their cities would remain calm, that they would represent “*el país que trabaja*” (“the country that works.”) The test came on the last day of Sánchez de Lozada’s government, even as his advisors recommended moving the seat of government to the city of Santa Cruz. On 16 October, a group of MAS supporters entered the city of Santa Cruz and were met, not by the police or military, but rather by members of the Unión Juvenil Cruceñista (UJC),<sup>258</sup> the Nación Camba, and other civilian groups. The ensuing confrontation left several MAS supporters badly injured. The next day, Sánchez de Lozada left the country for self-imposed exile in the United States. But the stage was now set for a polarized confrontation.

In a short time, a new *media luna* social movement would also gel around a common banner: the demand for regional autonomy. Like the equivalential chain that unified various “Andean” social movements, this pro-autonomy movement included a wide range of social organizations: the Bolivian Confederation of Private Entrepreneurs (CEPB), the powerful Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CAINCO), various departmental and regional *comités cívicos*, and regionalist groups like Nación Camba.<sup>259</sup> Some of these groups

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<sup>258</sup> The UJC is a semi-paramilitary youth organization with unclear ties to the Comité Cívico pro Santa Cruz.

<sup>259</sup> I distinguish between “regional” organizations such as the *comités cívicos* and “regionalist” organizations such as Nación Camba. The former are broad civic organizations meant to (ideally) represent a region’s civil society; the latter are ideologically committed to secession and demonstrate a substantial amount of anti-Andean xenophobia.



defended much of the neoliberal status quo. Still others were primarily concerned with the loss of political control in La Paz and worried about the “indigenization” of Bolivia.

While the first group of social movements were instrumental in toppling Sánchez de Lozada in October 2003, it was soon clear that many Bolivians—especially in the *media luna*—did not support the kind of political, social, and economic transformation the Andean movements pushed for. In many ways, the *media luna* movements were “reactionary” since they mobilized after, and principally in opposition to, the movements responsible for the *guerra del gas*. Yet, in other ways, the *media luna* movements were also an extension of the logic of pluralist democracy: they represented organized social groups that demanded greater political and economic autonomy from the central state. Like the *kataristas*, the *media luna* pro-autonomy movement used a mix of pluralist discourse (seeking respect for their cultural “uniqueness”) while denouncing a “colonialist” central state. Politically, the *guerra del gas* raised the political stakes by increasing polarization and helping to reduce cleavages by reducing class, ethnic, and regional factors into a single division: Andean-*media luna*. While the immediate cause of this break was an economic one—the question of Bolivia’s gas exports—the heart of the issue was a question of very nature of the Bolivian political community.

In the months that followed October 2003, two presidents tried to restore stability to the political system. One, Carlos Mesa, hoped to restore democratic stability by continuing Sánchez de Lozada’s mandate and remain in office until August 2007. Between October 2003 and June 2005, Mesa pushed through a series of reforms meant to address the key demands of the *guerra del gas*. Among these were a series of constitutional reforms—known as the 2004 Constitution—that (among other things) introduced electoral referenda. In July 2004, Mesa would put his proposed hydrocarbons law up for popular approval. Yet Mesa’s

efforts to win over the La Paz-El Alto street left him exposed to new anti-government forces from the *media luna* street. A 22 June 2004 pro-autonomy rally in the city of Santa Cruz drew between 100,000 and 300,000. Less than two weeks later, Mesa resigned. The new interim president, Rodríguez Veltzé made no promises of holding office until 2007; instead, he simply announced presidential—and prefectural (a compromise to *media luna* pro-autonomy demands)—elections within six months.

### **The 2004 Gas Referendum**

Before we consider the 2005 election, we should briefly consider the 2004 Gas Referendum. Bolivians voted in their first referendum election on July 2004, only months after the practice was introduced in the 2004 constitutional reforms. This first “gas referendum”—on the issue of the country’s hydrocarbons policy—was meant to transfer the volatile political issue from the street to the ballot box. Mesa had from the start made a gas referendum the cornerstone of his presidency. Yet early in the development of the gas referendum, it became clear that Mesa’s government was already crafting a hydrocarbons policy and planned to use the referendum simply to ratify this policy. From the start, Mesa publicly and actively campaigned for a “Yes” vote. Another controversy involved the government’s decision to print only Spanish-language ballots, though these were accompanied by a massive government-sponsored “educational campaign” meant to inform voters about the meaning of each of the referendum’s five questions.<sup>260</sup> In the end, the referendum left voters and political elites deeply divided—particularly as the election’s results were open to interpretation.

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<sup>260</sup> Not surprisingly, various social and political organizations also launched their own education campaigns, independent of the government.

Because Bolivian electoral law only counts “valid” votes (discounting blank and null ballots), the “Yes” vote won in each of the five referendum questions, despite the fact that “Yes” received less than a majority of the total votes cast in the final two questions (see Table 7.1).<sup>261</sup> Interestingly, though voters overwhelmingly supported “recovering ownership of all hydrocarbons at the wellhead,” fewer voters supported pursuing “sovereign and viable access to the Pacific Ocean” despite Mesa’s considerable pandering to anti-Chilean popular sentiment. Of all the referendum’s five questions, the one explicitly asking for support for a “*gas por mar*” (“gas for sea”) policy towards Chile received the lowest number of total votes and only a slim majority of the valid votes. Nevertheless, Mesa considered the referendum a success and proof of the legitimacy of his government’s policy initiative. He claimed the referendum gave parliament a mandate to approve Mesa’s new hydrocarbons law.

Beyond the ambiguity of the referendum’s support for Mesa’s policy preferences, there were other oddities. Despite the election’s high profile, voter turnout in the 2004 referendum was only 60.04%—the lowest voter turnout in any national-level election to date. Not surprisingly, turnout was highest in La Paz (64.99%) and Oruro (67.56%), the two predominantly Altiplano departments. Much of the *guerra del gas* mobilization took place in this part of the country. In contrast, voter turnout was lowest in Santa Cruz (53.41%) and Beni (49.25%). In part, several civic groups in the *media luna* had urged a boycott of the referendum, demanding that regional autonomy should instead be the first priority. But many voters in the Altiplano were also urged to boycott the referendum because of the Spanish-language ballots or because social movement leaders saw the referendum as a ruse. Nevertheless, the fact that more than one third of La Paz voters (and more than a quarter in

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<sup>261</sup> For detailed analysis of the 2004 referendum, see Tapia Mealla 2004.

the city of El Alto) did not cast a vote in a referendum on gas exports—ostensibly the key issue in the September-October social uprising—is problematic.

Table 7.1

Results of the 2004 gas referendum, as percent of total votes cast

Question	Yes	No	Blank	Null
1. Do you agree with repealing the Hydrocarbons Law ( <i>Ley 1689</i> ) enacted by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada?	66.8 <b>86.6</b>	10.3 <b>13.36</b>	10.8	12.1
2. Do you agree with recovering ownership of all hydrocarbons at the wellhead for the Bolivian state?	71.7 <b>92.2</b>	6.1 <b>7.8</b>	9.8	12.5
3. Do you agree with reestablishing YPFB, recovering state ownership over the Bolivian people's stakes in capitalized oil companies, so that it can participate in all stages of the hydrocarbons production chain?	67.2 <b>87.3</b>	9.8 <b>12.7</b>	12.3	10.7
4. Do you agree with President Carlos Mesa's policy of using gas as a strategic resource to achieve sovereign and viable access to the Pacific Ocean?	39.5 <b>54.8</b>	32.6 <b>45.2</b>	17.1	10.7
5. Do you agree that Bolivia export gas as part of a national policy framework that: ensures the gas needs of Bolivians; encourages the industrialization of gas in the nation's territory; levies taxes and/or royalties of up to 50% on the production value of oil and gas on companies, for the nation's benefit; and earmarks revenues from the export and industrialization of gas mainly for education, health, roads, and jobs?	44.2 <b>61.7</b>	27.4 <b>38.3</b>	16.7	11.7

Data provided by Bolivia's the Corte Nacional Electoral. Figures for "valid" votes are in bold. The question translations are my own.

Clearly, the 2004 Gas Referendum did not resolve the hydrocarbons issue. The results were open to interpretation and voter turnout was low. The low voter turnout is particularly puzzling. Not only was this the first popular referendum, it was also the first election held only months after a social conflict that centered—at least in the popular imagination—on the very issue of hydrocarbons policy. Only months later, voters would go to the polls in the previously-scheduled December 2004 municipal elections; overall voter turnout was 63.3%—up more than three points from the 1999 municipal elections (Romero Ballivián 2005). While the referendum did not put to rest the gas issue, it did demonstrate a sharp regional cleavage between “Andean” and “*media luna*” Bolivia. This polarization would only increase through 2004-2005, making itself remarkably clear in the December 2005 presidential and prefectural elections.

### **The 2005 General Election**

Not long after Carlos Mesa assumed the presidency on 17 October 2003, presidential hopefuls began lining up for the expected presidential election. Mesa had at first announced that his would be a transitional government and promised to call early elections. But in January 2004, he publicly declared his intention to finish out the remainder of Sánchez de Lozada’s five-year presidential term until 6 August 2007 (Mesa 2004). For a time, Mesa maintained a high level of public support. While he was a political outsider sympathetic to many of social movements involved in the *guerra del gas*, he was also a member of the political elite and promised continued constitutional stability. Most importantly, his political discourse

(unlike recent presidents) heavily relied longstanding anti-Chilean sentiments.<sup>262</sup> The result was a bizarre mix of elite-populism and intellectual technocracy: Mesa clearly sought to support his presidency—and his frequent brinksmanship with parliament—on popular support; but decisions were closely insulated within a circle of political class intelligentsia.

Over time, his populist strategy was not enough to dissuade the demands from various social movements. A particularly thorny issue was the *autonomista* demands of many *media luna* social movements—who viewed Mesa’s efforts to retain his popularity among La Paz and El Alto residents unfavorably. By June 2005, public confidence in Mesa’s government had declined sharply. Efforts at brinksmanship—threatening to step down from office while forcing his street popularity upon an unpopular legislature—finally failed on 9 June 2005, when parliament accepted his resignation (it had rejected two previous resignations). Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé, the head of the Supreme Court, assumed the presidency and immediately called for new elections.<sup>263</sup>

The long-anticipated 2005 election came after two years of ongoing political crisis that shattered the systemic party system. As such, the election contrasted sharply with the

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<sup>262</sup> Bolivia’s 1879 war with Chile (in which Bolivia lost its sea coast) is a nationalist flash point. Many of the *guerra del gas* protesters expressed outrage that Bolivian gas would be exported through Chile. There were even rumors that “Chilean agents” were cooperating with the Sánchez de Lozada government. Mesa’s aggressive international diplomacy to regain sovereign access to the sea (Bolivia currently enjoys duty-free privileges at the Chilean port of Arica) was clearly a means to bolster his own domestic support among popular sectors. The history of the war is, of course, a controversial subject in Bolivia—particularly if one questions the “official” Bolivian version. For a broader discussion of the war, see Querejazu 1992, Farcau 2000, Turpo 1982.

<sup>263</sup> Constitutionally, the order of succession places the president of the Senate and the president of the House of Deputies before the president of the Supreme Court. The unpopularity of (especially) Hormando Vaca Díez (MIR) and Mario Cossío (MNR), particularly among Andean social movements, made any orderly succession difficult. In part, Mesa clearly used this in his negotiations with parliament, knowing full well that he was more popular than either figure, particularly with the La Paz-El Alto street. After Vaca Díez and Cossío stepped aside, parliament speedily accepted Mesa’s 6 June offer of resignation and named Rodríguez Veltzé president.

previous five general elections. Additionally, though the 2005 election was conducted with the same mixed-member electoral system used in 1997 and 2002, the inclusion of prefecture candidate lists on parallel ballots further increased the ability of voters to vote for local candidates and increased the new “regionality” of Bolivian politics. Finally, the 2004 constitutional reforms had broken the official monopoly of political parties and made it easier for “citizen groups” and “indigenous communities” to campaign directly for public office, thus increasing the number of parties—particularly at the regional level.<sup>264</sup> This move was further reinforced by the un-linked nature of the prefectural elections.

While the 1997 and 2002 elections allowed voters two ballot choices—presidential candidate lists and uninominal legislative candidates—the 2005 election allowed a third choice: prefectural candidates. Unlike uninominal candidates, however, prefectural candidates were not tied to the presidential or legislative contest. The 2005 prefectural election was a separate, parallel election not formally included in the “general election.”<sup>265</sup> Prefectural candidates were listed on separate ballot sheets and often represented parties different from those listed on the presidential and uninominal ballot. In contrast, all the uninominal legislative candidates represented a corresponding presidential electoral list (as they had in 1997 and 2002). Many candidates for department prefect ran as independents nominated by “citizen’s group” that did not present candidates for president or parliament—

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<sup>264</sup> The 2004 Constitution changes to Articles 222, 223, and 224 outlined that political representation is expressed through “political parties and/or citizen groups and/or indigenous communities” (previously representation was limited to political parties). Of course, it is unclear how such citizen groups—which must also register for legal (or “juridic”) personality with the Corte Nacional Electoral—are substantially different from “political parties” (defined as organizations that seek political power through the electoral process) in anything other than name.

<sup>265</sup> The Corte Nacional Electoral divided the electoral process into a “general election” (for president, senators, plurinominal deputies, and uninominal deputies) and a “prefectural election.”

though most entered into formal alliances with presidential candidates and their parties.<sup>266</sup>

This section deals exclusively with the general election (the presidential and legislative election); the subsequent section deals briefly with the prefectural election.

Finally, the 2005 election also followed a period of intense political and electoral activity. The 2004 municipal elections had been the first test for many of the political parties. The poor performance of the systemic parties was a sign that the political landscape had fundamentally changed since 2003. The July 2004 referendum on gas was also the first popular referendum in Bolivia's democratic history, and raised expectations of future referendum—especially on the issue of regional autonomy. By December of 2005, Bolivian voters had gone to the polls a record three times in eighteen months. Likewise, the sheer number of marches, manifestations, and other forms of direct political action in the period between October 2003 and December 2005 coincided with growing demands for a constituent assembly and greater forms of direct political participation for individuals and interest groups.

### **Parties and Candidates**

Eight parties participated in the 2005 general election, three fewer than in 2002. Of the four of these that had participated in previous elections, two were anti-systemic parties (MAS and MIP), one was a neopopulist party (NFR), and only one was a traditional systemic party (MNR). The remaining electoral lists represented a mix of new and old political options emerging from post-2003 landscape. These included: a wing of the labor movement

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<sup>266</sup> Under such alliances, parties with presidential candidates did not officially participate in the respective presidential contest. E.g. Podemos did not “officially” nominate candidates in Tarija, Santa Cruz, or Cochabamba, but endorsed the “independent” candidacies of regional political alliances.



(USTB), a citizens' electoral alliance (FREPAB), and two new electoral vehicles launched by high-profile "systemic" politicians (Podemos and Unidad Nacional). The 2005 election also marked the sharpest polarization since 1985, with the electoral campaign quickly narrowed to two presidential candidates: Jorge Quiroga (Podemos) and Evo Morales (MAS). Though somewhat reductionist, the MAS and Podemos campaigns represented two polar opposites: MAS represented the left, the popular classes, the indigenous and *cholo* demographic, and "Andean" Bolivia. Podemos represented the right, the middle and upper classes, the *mestizo* and *criollo* demographic, and the *media luna*. In such a polarized political atmosphere, other parties and lists had limited political space to contest.

Early on it was clear that Morales, the *cocalero* leader and an important (if peripheral) figure of the 2003 protests, would again be the MAS presidential candidate. Morales' strong second-place showing in 2002 had also made him a natural choice for voters who rejected systemic or traditional parties but wanted to back a candidate with "winnability." MAS, historically a syndicalist movement rather than a strongly institutionalized party, had after 2003 developed close alliances with several rural, labor, and other sectoral organizations. During that time, Morales had also tried to distance himself from his image as a rabble-rouser in order to seek support from the middle classes. An alliance with the popular mayor of La Paz, Juan Del Granado, went a long way to gaining the confidence of many in the *paceño* middle class.<sup>267</sup> The addition of Alvaro Garcia Linera, a sociologist and former EGTK

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<sup>267</sup> Juan Del Granado had been a member of MBL before forming his own political party, MSM (Movimiento Sin Miedo). The announcement in June 2005 of a *frente amplio* alliance between MAS and MSM was an early boost to Morales' presidential campaign.

guerrilla leader, as Morales' running mate also added both intellectual gravitas and a more credible leftist trajectory to the MAS electoral campaign.<sup>268</sup>

Another early presidential contender was Jorge Quiroga. Unable to constitutionally run for election in 2002, the youthful Quiroga had nonetheless remained popular—topping several newspaper polls of “potential presidential candidates” between 2003 and 2005. Interestingly, Quiroga early on created a new political vehicle—Poder Democrático y Social (Podemos, which means “we can” in Spanish)—rather than organizing a campaign under the banner of ADN.<sup>269</sup> Though the systemic party formed a core element of the Podemos “social coalition,” Quiroga clearly expressed his desire to move beyond parties and establish a broad social front that included all relevant popular sectors. An alliance with the popular mayor of El Alto, José Luís Paredes, strengthened Quiroga's image as a reformist, rather than (merely) a systemic status quo candidate.<sup>270</sup> He was joined by María René Duchén, a well-known female Bolivian television news anchor from Santa Cruz, as vice presidential candidate.

The first candidate out the gate was Samuel Doria Medina, a wealthy entrepreneur who publicly left MIR and founded Frente de Unidad Nacional, a well-funded alliance of

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<sup>268</sup> García Linera's inclusion to the ticket also signaled a potential ideological and tactical shift in MAS.

Previously, MAS had aligned itself closely with well-known *poristas*, such as Filemon Escobar, who led the MAS parliamentary delegation. During the 2005 electoral campaign, MAS appealed to middle-class leftist intellectuals less tied to the Trotskyite syndicalist tradition.

<sup>269</sup> Quiroga's decision to campaign without the ADN party label reflects problems within the party following the Banzer's death. In part, his refusal to campaign on behalf of ADN in 2002 showed Quiroga already distancing himself from other party leaders. After the 2004 municipal elections, Quiroga publicly stepped down as leader of ADN and formed the Century XXI Alliance (Alianza Siglo XXI), a network of social-civic groups that campaigned as “Podemos.”

<sup>270</sup> As part of the alliance, Podemos supported Paredes' candidacy for the prefecture of La Paz. Paredes' campaign is discussed in the subsequent section.

social movements, in November 2003. Few were shocked when Doria Medina officially announced his candidacy for the presidency on 5 July 2005—a day before the election was officially announced. Despite periodic lulls, Unidad Nacional had maintained an active public relations campaign during the two years leading up to the December 2005 election, including active participation in the 2004 municipal elections (where many of its candidates did well). Doria Medina declared himself a “third way” centrist balanced between Quiroga and Morales, though he directly attacked Morales as too radical and called upon voters to “democratically blockade Evo Morales” from the presidency after having “so long suffered [Morales’] blockades” (*La Razón* 2005b).<sup>271</sup> Doria Medina’s choice for running mate—Carlos Dabdoub, a leader of the Nación Camba movement—was also highly controversial, however, and hindered the ticket’s appeal to Andean voters.

The only systemic party even to present an electoral list, the MNR entered the 2005 contest in deep crisis. The MNR’s 2005 campaign is outlined later in this chapter. Here, it is sufficient to note that the party nominated a relatively unknown candidate, Michiaki Nagatani in a campaign meant primarily to demonstrate the party’s continued relevance in post-2003 politics.

None of the other traditional parties officially participated in the 2005 election. ADN was principally incorporated into Podemos and contributed a number of parliamentary candidates. MIR had originally presented a list of candidates, headed by Hormando Vaca Diez, but the party soon withdrew in what many critics called a “suicide.” Paz Zamora had insisted that his party not participate in the general election, but instead focus on prefectural contests. Zamora’s pact with Quiroga (in exchange for support for Zamora’s bid for the

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<sup>271</sup> The blockade reference alluded to the frequent use of road blockades as a political tactic frequently used by Morales and other syndicalist and indigenous leaders.

prefecture of Tarija) strengthened the Podemos list with support from many MIR rank-and-file. Several MIR members, however, joined the Unidad Nacional list. MBL was also left in a weak position due to its close alliance with MNR in the 2002 election, and much of its support was scattered between pro-MAS and oppositional factions. Finally, UCS also split internally, with many former members flocking to other electoral lists—principally Unidad Nacional and Podemos.

Felipe Quispe was again the MIP presidential candidate. The party retained much of the same platform and discourse from the 2002 election. This time, however, the party's expectations were significantly lower than in 2002, once it was clear that MAS had captured much of its political space. Early rumors of a potential MAS-MIP alliance (including the possibility that Quispe would be Morales' running mate) proved false, as personal rivalries between the two leaders led to a decisive break. Quispe's running mate was again a female candidate (Camila Choquetijlla), a grocer merchant in the city of El Alto.

The rest of the field was comprised of two new party lists—USTB (Unión Social de Trabajadores de Bolivia) and FREPAB (Frente Patriótico Agropecuario de Bolivia)—and the “official” NFR candidate. The two smaller parties represented various independent social and syndicalist organizations that had not aligned themselves with any of the other lists and had marginal expectations. Finally, the NFR candidate, Gildo Angulo, ran despite strong opposition from the party's founder, Manfred Reyes Villa. From a strong debut in 2002, NFR had virtually collapsed after its founder (Reyes Villa) abandoned the party, entered a formal alliance with Podemos, and created a new personal electoral vehicle: Alianza por la Unidad Cochabambina (AUN).

## The Electoral Campaign

In large measure, the 2005 election was a national test for political forces in a post-2003 Bolivia. All major candidates accepted most of the “*agenda de octubre*” (the “October agenda”) that had become the core political issues since Sánchez de Lozada’s resignation in 2003. Beyond criticisms of specific general policies, such as calls for a revision of the country’s neoliberal economic policies in place since 1985, the *agenda* also appealed for a “re-founding” of the country, which included calls for a constituent assembly to write a new constitution. The *agenda* also included increasing demands—primarily from *media luna* departments—for regional political autonomy. In part, the parallel direct election of department prefects (the first election of its kind) was a step towards greater regional autonomy. Yet both demands demonstrate the erosion of social consensus on the country’s existing social, political, and economic structure. With even candidates like Quiroga and Nagatani advocating “adjustments” to the neoliberal model, the election became a question of how much change.

While Morales was not the most radical of the anti-establishment presidential candidates, he was one of the neoliberal status quo’s most vocal and established opponents.<sup>272</sup> With an early lead in the polls, Morales soon became the likely plurality winner. But topping out at 34.2% in the last pre-electoral poll, a majority victory was not seen as likely.<sup>273</sup> The question for many analysts and pundits was whether Morales or

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<sup>272</sup> Arguably the most radical presidential candidate was Felipe Quispe (MIP), a former EGTK guerrilla member and proponent of an autonomous, indigenous Aymara republic. While Quispe is (in Bolivia) about as well-known as Morales, his political support has never extended much further than the La Paz Altiplano and his party has never had more than a marginal impact on national electoral politics.

<sup>273</sup> The poll, distributed through several newspapers’ *Usted Elige* inserts on 14 December, was conducted by Ipsos Captura, an international polling organization.

Quiroga (who, polling 29.2%, was sure to place second) would be able to secure a legislative coalition for the necessary parliamentary election of the president. Early in the campaign, rumors flew about the possibility of a secret coalition agreement between Morales and Doria Medina, the “third way” neopopulist and Unidad Nacional presidential candidate (who denied such rumors). But as the campaign progressed, Doria Medina dropped from 16.9% to 8.9% in four polls conducted by Ipsos Captura for *Usted Elige*<sup>274</sup> between October and December.

The result was an increasing polarization between two candidates—Morales and Quiroga—who stood for markedly different political options. While Quiroga’s platform advocated some structural adjustments, he clearly stood as the only candidate from the political right and the one least likely to make radical political or economic structural changes. The December 2005 election thus was the first to pit two “presidentiable” candidates who represented sharply different political options.

In sharp contrast to previous elections, the 2005 contest was the first without presidential debates. Despite numerous public appeals by Quiroga, Morales repeatedly refused to engage in any direct political debates. Instead, the campaign relied primarily on campaigns through the media (including extensive use of the internet), as well as traditional campaign rallies. Morales and Quiroga traveled extensively throughout the country; other candidates traveled much less extensively, though Doria Medina and Nagatani also made numerous public appearances throughout the country.

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<sup>274</sup> *Usted Elige* is a periodical publication of election information published jointly through four newspapers: *La Prensa* (La Paz), *Los Tiempos* (Cochabamba), *El Deber* (Santa Cruz), *El Potosí* (Potosí), and *Correo del Sur* (Sucre). Its main competitor is *Recta Final*, a joint project involving the newspapers *La Razón* (La Paz), *El Nuevo Día* (Santa Cruz), and the ATB television network.

The lack of televised, public debate between the major candidates was significant. In part, the MAS campaign strategy relied on painting Morales as an outsider who eschewed “formal” politics. Critics, of course, suggested that the grass-roots *cocalero* leader was deliberately avoiding confrontation with the highly educated, articulate Quirga. As the candidate leading in the polls, Morales had everything to lose and little to gain from a face-to-face debate with Quiroga. Regardless, the impact limited the campaign’s discourse to mass rallies meant to publicly and symbolically demonstrate public support for one or another candidate. Substantively, the 2005 campaign reverted to traditional populist mobilization strategies while avoiding direct confrontation between different ideological positions.

Subsequently, the rhetoric of the campaign’s discourse focused more on symbolic than on substantive issues. Televisions spots focused on the charismatic personality of the presidential candidates, usually showing large masses of people cheering or marching. Another distinguishing feature was clothing. As early as 2004, Unidad Nacional began clothing its activists and potential candidates in white track jackets with the party’s logo emblazoned on the back and racing stripes in the party’s colors (blue and yellow). During the campaign, Podemos supporters and candidates (including Quiroga himself) were frequently seen suited in red track jackets with the campaign’s yellow five-pointed star emblazoned. In contrast to the flashy Quiroga and Doria Medina, Morales’ campaign dressed down in efforts to look more “humble” than his opponents—yet, ironically, cobalt blue MAS track jackets also made their appearance during the campaign.

The end result was an electoral campaign that over-emphasized the presidential contest (there was little individual attention paid to uninominal races) and devoid of specific programmatic appeals. Though some of the parties did distribute comprehensive political platforms, these were either primarily available via the Internet (e.g. MAS and Podemos) or

presented as lengthy and difficult to read ideological tracts (e.g. MAS and Unidad Nacional). Unlike in 1993, the major parties did not present succinct, specific programmatic appeals—in large part because the campaigns were not engaged in political discourse, but rather in mobilizing mass support. More than any other, the 2005 election resembled the highly personalized, polarized, and rally-based 1985 election. Electoral politics had come full circle.

## **Election Results**

The 18 December 2005 general election was an important turning point in Bolivian electoral politics. For the first time since democratization, a president was elected by direct popular vote, rather than by parliament. Evo Morales won a clear majority of the valid national popular vote (53.74%)—and with almost twice as many votes as the second runner up, Jorge Quiroga (28.59%). The departmental results also gave Morales' MAS majority victories in five of nine departments; Quiroga's Podemos only won plurality victories in the remaining four departments. The 2005 general election was also marked by remarkably high voter turnout—higher than in all previous elections—reversing the trend of declining voter turnout. Additionally, the share of valid votes (92.63%) was the second highest (after 1993) over all six post-transition elections and the share of votes for lists that won at least one legislative seat (96.60%) was the highest of any election. Finally, the virtual disintegration of the traditional parties suggested widespread rejection of the systemic party system. In short, the election seemed to give Morales a clear mandate.

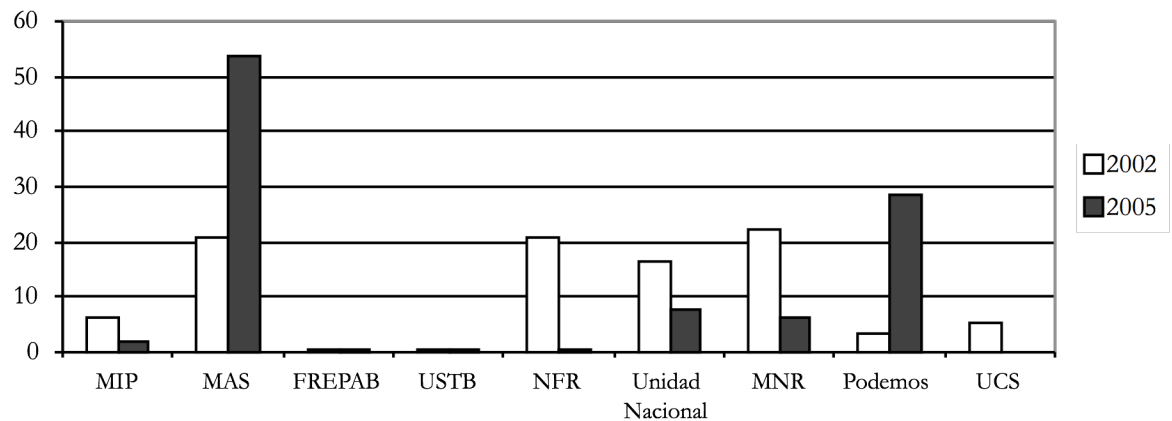
Two clear trends in the 2005 electoral data are an increased ideological and regional polarization (discussed below) and a sharp reduction in the effective number of parties. The second phenomenon is, of course, related to the first. But it is important to note that the number of effective national parties dropped considerably between 2002 (from 5.8) to 2005



(to 2.6). More importantly, the two major electoral blocs in this new constellation were both relatively new, representing broad social alliances only roughly aligned with the left or the right. Whether a new two-party system emerges remains to be seen. In the meantime, however, 2005 showed a remarkable bipolarity between MAS and Podemos (see Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1

Change in support for parties between 1997 and 2002, as percent of valid vote



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. Podemos figures for 2002 reflect ADN. Unidad Nacional figures for 2002 reflect MIR. USTB figures for 2002 reflect PS. FREPAB figures for 2002 reflect Condepa.

Interestingly, the effective number of parties across the nine departments was contradictory. 2005 saw a sharp decline in the effective number of parties across Andean departments. The sharpest decline was in La Paz, which fell from a highly fragmented 6.0 (in 2002) to a highly concentrated 1.6 (in 2005). Three other departments saw their effective number of parties drop below 2.0: Cochabamba, Oruro, and Potosí. While the effective number of parties also declined among the *media luna* departments, these were much smaller and nearly consistent with measures from previous elections. Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni, and

Pando all had effective number of parties measures higher than 3.0. For the first time, party systems in the *media luna* were more fragmented than party systems in Andean departments.

The second important development was a significant increase in the electorate's regional political polarization. While a trend in regional polarization between Andean and *media luna* departments had been noticeable at least since the 1990s, 2005 sharpened this divide. One of the most salient political cleavages during the campaign was regional, rather than socio-economic (though socio-economic cleavages often played out within regions). While demographic indicators (such as class or ethnicity) continued to affect political attitudes and behavior, these have increasingly converged with (or been subsumed by) cross-regional differences. Certainly at the aggregate (department) level, regional differences played out much more strongly than socioeconomic ones.

Politically, voters converged into two basic “systemic” and “anti-systemic” camps. While both tendencies were already present in Bolivian politics, voters in each broadly defined camp had previously split their votes between several electoral options. 2005, however, saw a clear two-candidate contest from the start, with both Morales and Quiroga representing starkly contrasting political options. Presidential ballot votes were the most concentrated of any election, both nationally and across every department, as Morales and Quiroga together captured 82.33% of all valid votes.

Despite his clear victory, Morales' election did not erase an increasing trend towards political polarization and regionalization in Bolivian politics. Instead, the 2005 election further sharpened the country's regional divisions (see Table 7.2). While Morales won a solid national majority, his support was disproportionately concentrated in the Andes, especially in the populous slum city of El Alto, where the MAS presidential candidate won more than three quarters of all valid votes. In contrast, in the *media luna*, Morales placed second in only

two departments (Santa Cruz and Tarija) and placed third in two others (Beni and Pando). More importantly, Morales' electoral victory left him facing a powerful opposition that was able to wield effective checks against his presidency. Opposition parties hold a majority of senate seats, with rival Podemos holding one seat more than MAS and one seat short of a simple majority.

Table 7.2  
Percent of valid vote for lead 2005 presidential candidates, by department

	Evo Morales (MAS)	Jorge Quiroga (Podemos)	Doria Medina (UN)	Nagatani (MNR)
Chuquisaca	<b>54.17</b>	30.93	7.91	4.31
La Paz	<b>66.63</b>	18.10	6.80	2.55
Cochabamba	<b>64.84</b>	25.05	5.55	2.47
Oruro	<b>62.58</b>	24.96	5.42	3.91
Potosí	<b>57.80</b>	25.69	5.09	5.68
Tarija	31.55	<b>45.28</b>	7.18	14.02
Santa Cruz	33.17	<b>41.80</b>	12.49	11.58
Beni	16.50	<b>46.31</b>	6.25	30.12
Pando	20.85	<b>45.19</b>	23.23	10.01
National	53.74	28.59	7.80	6.47

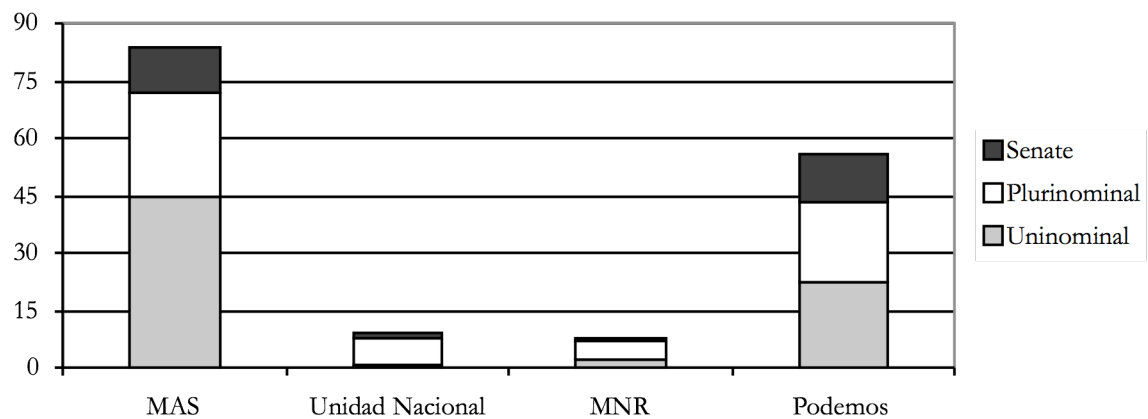
Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. Department winners in bold.

Only four parties won parliamentary seats in 2005 and the effective number of legislative parties dropped considerably (to 2.4). Unlike 1985, where two parties (the MNR and ADN) also won most of the legislative seats, this time only two other parties managed to win any additional seats. Additionally, in 2005 the two largest parties did not cooperate, but rather represented ideologically distant options. The result was a parliament that very closely resembled a typical two-party system (see Figure 7.2), though with each party more strongly entrenched in a different region. Interestingly, the difference in regional results left

Podemos in a stronger position in the Senate, where MAS won only 12 seats to Podemos' 13 (one short of a simple majority in the chamber).

Figure 7.2

Legislative seats by party, 2002



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral.

Regional electoral differences were significant and suggest a more cautious analysis, despite what on the surface looks like a clear MAS victory at the polls. A key component of this analysis is the results of the prefectural elections (discussed later). Another component, however, is the marked differences between uninominal and plurinominal votes. Both factors combine with marked regional differences to suggest that Morales' support is wide, but not deep. By this I mean that while Morales' victory demonstrated substantial national support for his personal presidential campaign, other MAS candidates received significantly lower levels of electoral support.

A comparison between plurinominal and uninominal votes shows a significant drop in electoral support for MAS—as a political organization. While most of the other parties'

aggregate vote shares remained roughly the same, aggregated uninominal MAS votes dropped more than ten points (to 43.52%). This is partly explained by cross-ticket voting, with minor increases in vote shares for Unidad Nacional and MNR candidates (vote shares for Podemos remained virtually unchanged). But the change was also partly driven by a twenty-point spike (to 24.48%) in the percentage of blank votes, suggesting that pro-Morales voters disproportionately cast blank votes for uninominal candidates. The number of blank uninominal ballots in 2005 was, on average, twelve points higher than in the previous election; in several uninominal districts, blank ballots accounted for nearly a third of all votes cast.

The large number of blank ballots cast for uninominal candidates is especially surprising, when one considers that prefecture ballots (which were on an entirely different paper ballot) had fewer blank votes than the presidential-plurinominal ballot. Remarkably, more voters cast ballots for a prefectural candidate than for a presidential candidate. Thus, despite participating in their third election under a mixed-member electoral system, voters cast large shares of blank votes for the second (uninominal) half of their ballot—even when most then went on to mark a second—and different—ballot sheet to mark their preferred prefecture candidate.

While the 2005 presidential election gave Morales a clear and direct popular victory, there is considerable question about how enduring this support is likely to remain. The tension and high stakes of the contest, combined with pre-electoral polling data, suggest that Morales' victory was based more on personality than on questions of policy. Perhaps voters were willing to let Morales take the presidency, but were hesitant about giving his party all the reigns of power. Alternately, voters may have voted not “for” Morales, but in rejection of “traditional” politics. Shortly after the election, there were disputes even within Morales'

own coalition over the direction of the new government.<sup>275</sup> Moreover, Morales' election stiffened the opposition—concentrated in *media luna* Bolivia—to increase pressure for greater regional political autonomy. The political conflict between the central government and regional autonomy movements has since taken center stage, forcing the Morales government to negotiate a difficult compromise with the opposition that limited his party's ability to dominate the constituent assembly.<sup>276</sup>

### Government Formation

Unlike in previous elections, Morales' majority victory at the polls eliminated the need for parliament to select a president. Instead, only a day after the preliminary electoral results, Quiroga had already conceded the presidency to Morales. The new president-elect soon set about organizing a new cabinet in anticipation of his 21-22 January inaugural ceremonies.<sup>277</sup> The new cabinet was composed of sixteen ministers (including two ministers without portfolio). Many of the cabinet members were members of social movements that had supported MAS during the electoral campaign, some of these with limited political administrative experience.

An early concern for the new administration was the lack of a majority in the Senate (it had a comfortable majority in the House of Deputies), where it would require support

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<sup>275</sup> Though much of this can be reduced to arguments over how to divide government patronage, such as cabinet and sub-cabinet appointments, many of the disagreements were more fundamental. In part, this was natural since the broad MAS coalition included many groups with contradictory policy goals, each making demands from the incoming Morales government.

<sup>276</sup> This dissertation does not include analysis of the July 2006 election to the Constituent Assembly.

<sup>277</sup> On 21 January, Morales held a symbolic indigenous ceremony at Tiwanaku, where he was "crowned" with the Aymara title of Apu Mallku ("supreme chief"). The "official" state inaugural ceremony was held in parliament on 22 January.

from both the MNR and Unidad Nacional if Morales hoped to secure a legislative majority in the chamber. Nevertheless, Morales has not relied on coalition partners and instead heads the country's first single-party government since 1952-1964. Other than an agreement with Juan Del Granado's MSM, Evo Morales' presidency avoided political agreements with other established political parties. Still, the wide variety of social movements allied with the core MAS organizational structure (which is heavily concentrated on *campesino* syndicates of the Cochabamba valleys) suggests potentials for internal divisions within the MAS alliance. Similarly, the strong regionalist opposition to radical anti-neoliberal reforms has hindered the government's maneuverability. Despite a comfortable majoritarian victory for Evo Morales, his government governs a deeply polarized Bolivia.

### **The 2005 Prefectural Elections**

One of the forces supporting this new polarization stems from the new, popularly-elected prefects elected. The 2005 prefectural election was the first of its kind in post-democratization Bolivia: previously, prefects were appointed by the president. The decision to allow direct popular election of Bolivia's nine departmental prefects was a compromise decision meant to appease proponents of greater regional autonomy who demanded a public referendum on regional (i.e. departmental) autonomy.<sup>278</sup> Though lacking popularly elected departmental assemblies or other autonomic institutional structures, the election popularly legitimated the departmental prefects' control over economic and political resources. It also set prefects for potential conflicts with the central state, something not likely when presidents appointed prefects.

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<sup>278</sup> A public referendum on the question of regional autonomy was finally held on July 2006.

Table 7.3

Percent of valid vote for 2005 prefecture contests, by department

	MAS	Podemos (or ally)	MNR (or ally)	Unidad Nacional
La Paz	33.81	<b>37.99</b>	2.47	4.84
Cochabamba	43.09	<b>47.64</b>		5.34
Oruro	<b>40.95</b>	28.26	4.84	8.23
Potosí	<b>40.69</b>	29.81	6.91	4.72
Chuquisaca	<b>42.31</b>	36.34	5.73	
Tarija	20.43	33.92	<b>45.65</b>	
Santa Cruz	24.17	<b>47.88</b>	27.95	
Beni	6.72	<b>44.64</b>	29.82	
Pando	6.00	<b>48.03</b>		45.97

Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. Department winners in bold.

Each department's prefectural election was contested by a different set of parties and electoral alliances. Not all parties that contested the presidency and parliamentary seats fielded prefectural candidates; likewise, many regional parties or electoral alliances fielded prefectural candidates but did not field presidential or parliamentary candidates. Only MAS put forward candidates for prefect in all nine departments. Podemos only campaigned directly in six departments, though it officially endorsed "allied" candidates in the other three departments. The MNR put forward official candidates in only five departments.<sup>279</sup> Unidad Nacional only put forward candidates in four departments. In contrast, MIR, which did not participate in the general election, nevertheless campaigned for three prefectures—with its historic leader and founder, Paz Zamora, campaigning for the prefecture of Tarija under the Convergencia Regional (CR) banner. Several of the "independent" candidates, however, actually joined in political pacts with Podemos (which did not field competitors in those departments). These included Paz Zamora in Tarija, Manfred Reyes Villa in Cochabamba,

<sup>279</sup> Though two of these "official" MNR candidates campaigned as members of alliances in Santa Cruz and Tarija (as A3-MNR and CC, respectively).



and Rubén Costas in Santa Cruz. Thus, Podemos indirectly campaigned for prefectures in all nine departments. For overall results, see Table 7.3.

In La Paz (which saw eight candidates), the chief contenders were José Luis Paredes, the popular mayor of El Alto, and Manuel Morales Dávila.<sup>280</sup> Paredes had previously abandoned MIR to form his own political platform, Plan Progreso (PP), and had recently won reelection as El Alto mayor in December 2004. Until September, Paredes negotiated with Unidad Nacional, before signing a pre-electoral accord with Podemos. Meanwhile, MAS negotiations with the powerful El Alto neighborhoods' federation (FEJUVE) fell apart, leaving MAS to nominate Morales Dávila, a socialist septuagenarian who had participated in previous IU and MAS electoral lists. Surprisingly, MAS was unable to win the prefecture of the department that voted for Evo Morales by the widest margin: Paredes won with 37.99% of the valid vote to Morales Dávila's 33.81%.<sup>281</sup>

The chief contenders in Cochabamba were Reyes Villa and Jorge Alvarado, a geologist who had assumed control over the city of Cochabamba's water utility after the April 2000 *guerra del agua*. Reyes Villa's candidacy was potentially controversial, since he abandoned the party he himself had created only a decade earlier to form a new regional political vehicle, Alianza de Unidad Cochabambina (AUN). Early in the campaign, Reyes Villa signed a pre-electoral accord with Podemos; though Reyes Villa would run under his own AUN banner, Podemos would not present a candidate, but would actively support the Reyes Villa campaign. The campaign essentially pitted Reyes Villa's urban political machine

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<sup>280</sup> The only other significant candidate was David Vargas, the police major who had led the February 2003 mutiny. Since February 2003, he had built a small, semi-clandestine personalist political movement. He polled 11.98% as a prefectural candidate for FREPAB.

<sup>281</sup> The remaining votes were split between six other candidates.

against MAS' rural social networks. Again, the results were something of a political surprise. The Podemos-endorsed Reyes Villa won (with 47.64%) over Alvarado (43.09%).<sup>282</sup>

The prefectural contest in Santa Cruz was entirely split between three candidates: Rubén Costas, Freddy Soruco, and Hugo Salvatierra. Costas, a key figure among the department's regionalist leaders (he had been executive-secretary of the Comité Cívico pro Santa Cruz), campaigned with an electoral alliance named Autonomías para Bolivia (APB) that included many members of ADN, MIR, and UCS. The campaign was closely tied to Podemos, which had endorsed Costas in the department. Soruco, a popular general in the national police, had earlier formed a civic association known as Alianza-3 (A3).<sup>283</sup> He campaigned in close alliance with the MNR, using the banner A3-MNR. Salvatierra, a rural social activist, was the MAS candidate. Not surprisingly, the MAS candidate failed to win the Santa Cruz prefecture, placing a distant third (24.17%) behind the A3-MNR candidate (27.95%). The Podemos-endorsed Costas won a clear victory with nearly double his nearest opponent (47.88%).

Tarija saw similar results as Santa Cruz. There, the contest involved only three candidates: Mario Cossío, Paz Zamora, and Luis Alfaro Arias, a rural social activist. The Tarija prefecture contest saw the MNR's strongest performance in 2005. Though campaigning under the banner of a newly-formed electoral alliance, Camino al Cambio ("Path towards Change"), Cossío—the head of the MNR parliamentary delegation and

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<sup>282</sup> The remaining votes were split between two other candidates.

<sup>283</sup> The complete name of the organization is: Alianza Trabajo, Responsabilidad, Eficiencia y Seguridad (or Alianza-TRES).

president of the House of Deputies—never severed his relationship with the MNR.<sup>284</sup> The results were stunning. Cossío won the Tarija contest with 45.65% of the valid vote, while the Podemos-endorsed Paz Zamora placed second with 33.92% and the MAS candidate (Alfaro Arias) received only 20.43%.

Results in other Andean and *media luna* departments reflected a regional polarization. In Beni and Pando, MAS prefectural candidates failed to win seven percent of the valid vote. Instead, both departments saw Podemos candidates win substantial victories.<sup>285</sup> In contrast, Oruro, Potosí, and Chuquisaca saw the only MAS prefectural victories.<sup>286</sup> Even there, however, Podemos candidates did well, winning a similar or greater share of the valid vote than Quiroga did in the presidential contest. With the notable—and remarkable—exceptions of La Paz and Cochabamba, MAS candidates won the prefectures only Andean departments; Podemos and MNR candidates won in the *media luna*.

The new, elected prefects impose serious limitations on Evo Morales' government. Because they were popularly elected by regional constituencies, political opponents such as Reyes Villa, Paredes, Costas, and Cossío can claim the same kind of popular legitimacy as Evo Morales. Similarly, the *autonomista* prefects can claim an electoral mandate in favor of greater regional political autonomy. Perhaps more importantly, their positions as prefects give such leaders institutional resources with which to challenge the central state and its MAS-led government in ways, while providing incentives for even greater political autonomy

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<sup>284</sup> Cossío was frequently referred to as the *movimientista* or *emenerista* candidate and his ballot color employed the MNR pink.

<sup>285</sup> The winners were: Ernesto Suárez Sattori in Beni and Leopoldo Fernández in Pando.

<sup>286</sup> The winners were: David Sánchez Heredia in Chuquisaca, Alberto Aguilar in Oruro, and Mario Virreira in Potosí.

in order to further insulate their political base from the central government. At the very least, the democratically elected prefects present a powerful political institutional check on MAS.

### **The Decline of the MNR?**

The decline of the MNR—the political party with the longest historical trajectory in Bolivian politics—in 2005 deserves special attention and should be taken in context. While the party’s fourth place finish (6.47%) was its worst ever, it did remarkably well when compared to the virtual disintegration of ADN in 2002 (3.40%). After Sánchez de Lozada’s overthrow in October 2003, public sentiment against the MNR—particularly in Andean La Paz and Cochabamba—was extremely high. And in the two years leading up to December 2005, the party was highly divided internally over issues of leadership, policy platform, and future strategy.

The party’s nomination of Michiaki Nagatani, after a contentious party congress in Santa Cruz, was a surprise. The previously-unknown son of Japanese immigrants impressed many with his austere yet confident campaign in the 2004 Santa Cruz municipal elections, but his citizen’s group (Movimiento de Acción Ciudadana, MACA) had won only 3.86% of the city’s vote.<sup>287</sup> Many expected a more experienced party figure to run for president; earlier rumors hinted at recognized names like Juan Carlos Durán (the 1997 presidential candidate), Percy Fernández (a former mayor of Santa Cruz), or Moira Paz (a senator from Tarija and

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<sup>287</sup> Because the 2004 constitutional amendments loosened the requirements for candidates to run for municipal elections (candidates could now run without the support of a “political party” but with the support of a “citizen’s group” or “indigenous community”), Nagatani was able to campaign independently of the “official” MNR candidate (Maria Desiree Bravo, a uninominal deputy from Santa Cruz). Other established MNR members also campaigned independently, such as Roxana Sandoval (the popular, yet controversial, uninominal deputy from Santa Cruz) nominated by the citizen’s group MCPP.

the daughter of Víctor Paz Estenssoro), who hoped simultaneously to distance themselves from Sánchez de Lozada while campaigning on their previous public office records. Almost immediately after Nagatani's nomination was announced, several party leaders (including Durán and Moira Paz) denounced the nomination as manipulated by partisans loyal to Sánchez de Lozada. The MNR thus entered the 2005 election after a controversial nomination that bitterly divided party leaders (members even came to blows during the nomination process) and with a candidate with little name recognition but who was accused of simply being creature of Sánchez de Lozada.

Nevertheless, Nagatani ran a steady campaign that slowly gained momentum.<sup>288</sup> A somewhat-reconciled party machine and an electoral list that included many established MNR figures and incumbents, such as his vice presidential candidate, Guillermo Bedregal, boosted Nagatani's presidential campaign.<sup>289</sup> While a few former MNR members became legislative candidates on other electoral lists, most of the rank-and-file remained loyal and ran under the party's banner. More importantly, despite placing a distant fourth, the party retained its position as an important party within the four *media luna* departments—the same region where it had consistently done well since 1985—even winning an impressive 30.12% in Beni. Nagatani and the MNR did poorly (not surprisingly) in Andean departments,

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<sup>288</sup> Before Nagatani's candidacy was announced on 21 August 2005, his name was not included in any polls. A pre-electoral poll by Apoyo, Opinión y Mercado gave Nagatani only 2% nationwide in early September. Between the first week of October and the first week of December, a series of four Ipsos-Captura polls gave Nagatani between a low of 4.1% (the first poll) and a high of 5.5% (the third poll).

<sup>289</sup> Bedregal was an established MNR elder statesman, having played a key role in the party since 1952. In the post democratization period, he was elected deputy from La Paz in 1985, 1989, 1993, and plurinominal deputy in 1997; Bedregal also served briefly as Planning Minister (before he was replaced by Sánchez de Lozada) and later as Foreign Minister in the 1985-1989 Paz Estenssoro administration.

especially La Paz and Cochabamba, where the MNR's fortunes had already been steadily in decline since the 1990s.

A brief comparison with 1997 and 2002 is instructive. The MNR's 1997 presidential campaign was also plagued by problems, after its original candidate (René Blattmann) withdrew and was replaced by Durán. The campaign was hurried and disorganized, producing the party's worst showing to that time (18.59%). The 2002 Sánchez de Lozada campaign saw the party recover, but only slightly. More significantly, the party only picked up a few percentage points in the departments of La Paz (+3.16%), Cochabamba (+1.42%), and Oruro (+1.87%). Thus, when the MNR recovered almost four points nationally between 1997 and 2002, its recovery was markedly lower in Andean departments. The MNR had already effectively lost support from two traditionally important sectors of its electorate: the mining communities of Oruro and the rural communities of the Cochabamba valley. Similarly, the party's substantial national decline between 2002 and 2005 was greater in the same Andean departments, and smaller in *media luna* departments.

The MNR's relatively respectable showing in 2005 contest suggests the party may yet play an important role in regional (if not national) politics for some time to come. More importantly, the party has demonstrated a significant level of institutionalization. Unlike ADN, the party has survived both the death of its founders and a deep crisis of legitimacy following Sánchez de Lozada's deeply troubled and controversial second presidency. Its single seat in the Senate also gives the MNR a significant role, as it gives the party a balancing role between MAS and Podemos—especially since a pro-MAS majority requires cooperation from both the MNR and Unidad Nacional (which also won a single seat). This puts Morales in the uncomfortable position of needing the support of the political party that epitomizes the pre-2003 status quo. The MNR's seven seats in the House of Deputies also

gives it a sizeable presence. Finally, although the party only officially campaigned for five prefectures, it placed second in Beni and Santa Cruz and Mario Cossío's victory in Tarija gave the party a stronghold in at least one department. Clearly, the MNR no longer has the kind of broad national support it enjoyed in the 1980s and early 1990s. But even at its lowest historical point, the party continues to have political relevance.

### **Dealignment or Power Shift?**

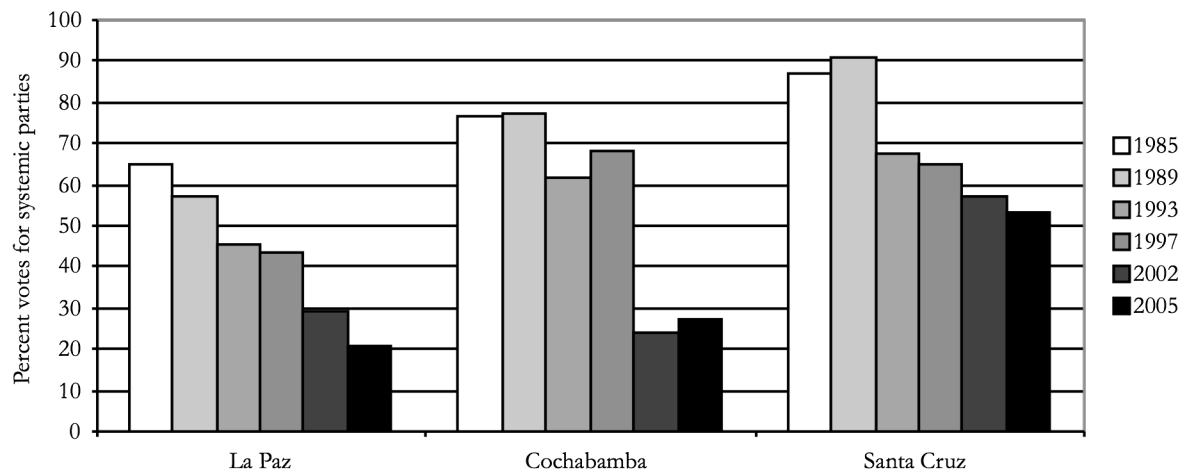
In contrast to the first two institutional periods, which saw the consolidation of a post-1952 party system, the 2005 election saw a complete dealignment of the party system. Until 2005, the party system represented had stabilized into a moderate-competitive system anchored around three systemic parties: the MNR, ADN, and MIR. These three parties represented different faces of an elite political class that had settled upon a broad liberal-pluralist consensus following the 1982-1985 UDP experience. The 2005 election saw the collapse of this system. A strongly polarized political competition and the early signs of an emergent two-party system has emerged in its place. While there are still considerable signs of continued consensus among the "systemic elite" (those members of the political class who supported the pre-2003 status quo), that elite is no longer dominant. On December 2005, Bolivia's democracy on stilts—which had been teetering since 2002—finally fell down. It is still unclear what kind of system will take its place.

Clearly, 2005 marked a decline in the electoral appeal of systemic parties. It is important to note, however, that this decline was not an entirely new phenomenon. A gradual erosion of support for systemic parties was noticeable since the 1990s, though its impact was mostly felt in Andean departments. What is remarkable, however, is a comparison of votes for systemic parties (including 2005 Podemos) between Bolivia's three

most populous departments: La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz (see Figure 7.3).<sup>290</sup> When we included votes for Podemos, we see an overall decline for “systemic” votes since 1985. But we also notice that the decline is much less sharp in Santa Cruz (which actually has the sharpest decline of any *media luna* department). Even in 2005, a little more than half of all votes cast in Santa Cruz were cast for systemic presidential candidate lists.

Figure 7.3

Support for systemic parties in *eje troncal*, across elections



Data provided by Bolivia’s Corte Nacional Electoral. All figures reflect presidential votes. Figures for 2005 include votes for Podemos. Since both opponents and supporters consider Podemos a status quo (or systemic) party and since most of its candidates (including Quiroga) were established members of systemic parties, I believe its inclusion is justified.

The 2005 election was most remarkable because it was the first election driven primarily by Andean voters. Since 1985, voters in Andean departments had steadily shifted away from systemic parties. But because this was not yet accompanied by a significant shift

<sup>290</sup> Together, the departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz include more than two-thirds of the Bolivian population.



among *media luna* voters, the systemic parties could still elect presidents through 2002 based on their share of parliamentary seats won in those departments. Meanwhile, until 2005, Andean voters had shifted away from systemic parties, but had not yet moved consistently towards an alternative alignment structure; instead, Andean voters simply increased electoral volatility measures. In short, until 2005, *media luna* voters over-determined presidential outcomes.<sup>291</sup> In sharp contrast, 2005 was the first presidential election primarily driven by Andean voters.

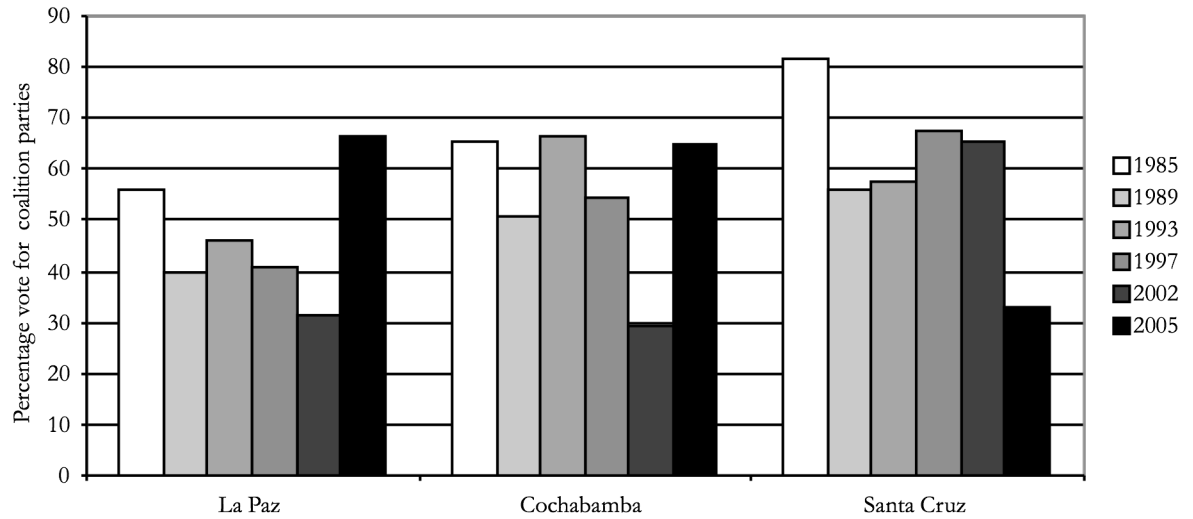
A look at votes for coalition parties across the three departments is again indicative (see Figure 7.4). Until 2005, a disproportionate—and growing—number of La Paz and Cochabamba voters were voting for parties that did not go on to become members of the multiparty government. Measures of support for “coalition parties” include votes for all parties that went on to join the incoming presidential or government coalition. Not surprisingly, support for coalition parties had been declining in La Paz and Cochabamba since 1985. Meanwhile, support for coalition parties in Santa Cruz remained high, actually increasing between 1989 and 1997. In simplest terms, by the 1990s, the majority of La Paz voters were consistently voting for “losers” and were not represented in government coalitions. Cochabamba reached that point later, in 2002. The 2005 election produced the mirror image: less than a third of Santa Cruz voters voted for their new government, while approximately two-thirds of voters in La Paz and Cochabamba.

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<sup>291</sup> One way *media luna* departments could over-determine outcomes has to do with seat malapportionment. Because several of the *media luna* departments are small, they enjoy a disproportionate number of legislative seats (particularly in the Senate).

Figure 7.4

Support for governing coalitions in *eje troncal*, across elections



Data provided by Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral. Figures for 1997 do not include votes for Condepa, which was a member of the government coalition until it was expelled a year later, in 1998. Figures for 2002 do not include votes for NFR, which was briefly a member of the coalition during a few weeks in 2003.

What the 2005 election demonstrated was a power shift, as the center of Bolivian political gravity shifted from the *media luna* to the Andes. The process of dealignment away from systemic powers was most complete in the Andes, though it was only in 2005 that Andean voters—as a solid bloc—embraced a single political vehicle: MAS. The party of Evo Morales had already established itself as a power in rural Cochabamba as early as 2002. But in that election, MAS had not yet gained the trust of other Andean voters. Beyond rejecting systemic alternatives, there was no single common thread uniting (electorally) the many disaffected Andean voters. As late as 2002, Andean voters experimented with and vacillated between numerous populist and anti-systemic alternatives (e.g. MIP or Condepa).

Voters in La Paz were a driving force in Evo Morales' 2005 victory; its increase in vote share (44.14%) was the largest increase in any department. While MAS had won a

plurality in La Paz in 2002, this was a very slim plurality (22.49%) in a field nearly evenly split by five candidates (including 15.32% for the fourth-place MNR and 11.49% for the fifth-place MIR). Whereas MAS won its narrowest department in victory in La Paz in 2002, in 2005 it won its widest victory. This dramatic change was principally driven by the city of El Alto (see Table 7.4), where MAS won a crushing 77.09% of the presidential ballot vote (compared to only 55.68% in the city of La Paz).<sup>292</sup> Likewise, MAS captured most of the rural Andean Altiplano, which had previously been a *katarista* stronghold. There, Felipe Quispe saw a serious setback as its voters defected to support Evo Morales, rather the MIP candidate. Clearly, in 2005, La Paz voters had not only solidly rejected the systemic parties, they had also closed ranks behind a single presidential candidate: Evo Morales. Long a backer of “losing” candidates, in 2005 La Paz reasserted itself as Bolivia’s political-electoral center of gravity.

Table 7.4

Percent of valid vote for parties in the city of El Alto, 2002 and 2005

<b>Year</b>	<b>MAS</b>	<b>MIP</b>	<b>NFR</b>	<b>MNR</b>	<b>Podemos</b>
2002	27.85	17.89	21.26	8.64	13.48
2005	77.09	1.68	0.31	1.00	10.58

Data provided by Bolivia’s Corte Nacional Electoral. 2002 Podemos figures reflect ADN and MIR.

Of course, this shift has been heavily resisted across the *media luna*, where elites (particularly in Santa Cruz and Tarija) seek means to prevent the kind of radical structural

<sup>292</sup> Votes cast for MAS in El Alto (236,015) alone comprise 8.21% of the total Bolivian electorate. Whereas in 2005 one in every six MAS votes was cast in the city of El Alto, only one in ten Bolivian votes was cast in El Alto.

reforms Morales' government proposes. The new shift has also made regionalist claims of an unresponsive, centralist state more appealing to voters who, like the Altiplano voters of the 1990s, no longer see themselves or their interests represented by their government. And as Evo Morales and his supporters push for an "indigenization" of Bolivian cultural and social life, lowland *mestizo* and *criollo* elites are quick to remind lowland Bolivians of their own "unique" and "non-Andean" society and cultural heritage. These moves coincide with conflict over the very issues that burst to the surface during the October 2003 *guerra del gas*: Has neoliberalism hindered or helped Bolivia and its people?

But while the *guerra del gas* made clear widespread discontent with the existing status quo—and the political parties that represented that status quo—it also served as a catalyst for new regionalist movements out of the *media luna* departments. Movements like Nación Camba were, in many ways, a mirror image of Andean *katarista* movements.<sup>293</sup> Like the *kataristas*, the Nación Camba regionalists employ a hybrid mix of pluralism (emphasizing their "uniqueness" within the larger culture), claims of re-vindicating (and re-inventing) past historical mythologies, and a "subaltern" discourse that challenges an "internal colonizing" state culture. Regardless of whether we see Nación Camba members as an elite minority or not, their discourse clearly adopts the modalities that typify "subaltern" discourses (Spivak 1988). Because post-2003 threw into question the very nature of the Bolivian nation(s), a lowland discourse of "internal colonialism"—which had lain dormant since the 1950s—reasserted itself (Gandarilla 2003). In many ways, post-2003 politics was marked a clash

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<sup>293</sup> Nación Camba was founded in 2001, specifically (by its own declaration) as a counter to the new *katarista* movements, which Nación Camba describes as "xenophobic and exclusionary" and whose objective is "non other than the occupation of camba geopolitical space" (see Nación Camba, "Génesis").

between at least two cultural visions: the vision of an “Andean” indigenous Bolivia and a (reactionary) *mestizo-criollo* lowland cultural identity.

It is in this context that Evo Morales becomes a truly polarizing figure. The conflict between Morales’ supporters and his opponents is not entirely (or even principally?) about economic policy. Rather, at the heart of this new political struggle is the question of national identity. The newly empowered “indigenous” Morales government seeks to move away from a post-Chaco middle-class nationalism—even while retaining much of its state-corporatist discourse. Already undermined by system elite’s pluralism, the old national revolutionary nationalism is being supplanted by a new “official” discourse that emphasizes Bolivia’s indigenous—and Andean—cultural roots. This is, of course, being resisted by *media luna* elites and their followers. Like the *kataristas*, these lowland regionalists reject a hegemonic social discourse imposed from “outside.” At the heart of the matter is the question of Bolivia’s evolving national imaginary; the recently elected constituent assembly faces the difficult task of mending the Bolivian social fabric back together again.

## CHAPTER 8

### COMPARISONS ACROSS INSTITUTIONAL PERIODS: ANALYSES OF STATISTICAL MODELS USING 1985-2005 DATA

Thus far, this discussion of Bolivian politics has been divided into three distinct institutional periods (as defined in Chapter 4). The first period (1985-1993) covered the three general elections that were conducted under a list-proportional representation (list-PR) electoral system and before the introduction of significant institutional changes. The second period (1993-2002) covered the two general elections that followed a series of institutional reforms that included the adoption of a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system and the decentralization of the country under the 1994 Ley de Participación Popular. Both reforms significantly altered the institutional framework within which electoral competition took place. The third period (2002-2005) includes the election that followed the dramatic break with the earlier institutional political stability and the collapse of the party system. This chapter analyzes electoral data across all three institutional periods to test whether there exists any statistically significant relationships between measures for electoral stability and two key explanatory variables:

1. The change in institutional framework between the first and second periods.
2. Regional cleavages between Andean and *media luna* departments.

Because this study has argued that the change in institutional framework affected electoral behavior, these models seek to demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between change in institutional framework and party systems variables. Additionally, the use of multivariate models allows for control over any pre-existing regional variations as well as

to control for temporal effects (i.e. changes from one institutional period to another) across regions (i.e. differences between Andean and *media luna* departments).

The general methods employed in this chapter are straightforward, relying on simple linear regression models, and are meant to support the qualitative observations developed in the three preceding chapters. These include a combination of cross-sectional and time-series regression models drawn from three different electoral levels:

1. Bolivia's nine departments.
2. A representative sample of thirty-two municipalities drawn from across each of the country's departments (for a full list of the municipalities, see Table 8.2).
3. Disaggregated district-level (*circunscripción*) data for both uninominal and plurinominal party vote shares in each of the country's uninominal districts since 1997.<sup>294</sup>

Additionally, a series of 2005 models are used to test whether the sharp post-2003 political polarization is significantly attributed to regional factors, when controlling for various independent variables. These models include both plurinominal (presidential), uninominal, and prefectural voting data disaggregated by *circunscripción* (the single-member, first-past-the-post electoral districts used to elect uninominal deputies). The data sets used in this study are available online at <http://www.dickinson.edu/~centellm/datasets>.

All of the data used in this chapter came primarily from two sources. The first was Bolivia's Corte Nacional Electoral (CNE), whose staff kindly provided plurinominal data for the 1997, 2002, and 2005 general elections, as well as 2005 prefectural data, disaggregated by *circunscripción*. The CNE also provided municipal-level data for the 2002 and 2005 elections. Most recent electoral data (including data for the 2004 and 2006 referendums and the 2006

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<sup>294</sup> The number of uninominal electoral districts has changed from 68 in 1997-and 2002, to 70 in 2005. The expansion was driven by the reapportionment of seats before the 2005 election based on recent census data.

constituent assembly election) can be accessed online at <http://www.cne.org.bo>. Municipal-level data for the 1985-1997 elections came from a FUNDEMOS (1998) volume that lists general election results disaggregated down to the village level.<sup>295</sup>

### Using Disaggregated Data

Most comparative studies that consider the Bolivian case have relied extensively on aggregate, national-level data.<sup>296</sup> While such studies have been fruitful—particularly when the Bolivian case was included into multinational studies—such studies may also hide some of the internal complexities of Bolivian electoral politics. In contrast, this study has instead focused extensive attention on the main sub-units of Bolivian politics: the nine departments. But Bolivian electoral politics can be further disaggregated to other levels, which has the added methodological benefit of increasing the number of units of observation (producing a “larger  $N$ ”). In this section I wish to briefly outline the procedures used to analyze electoral data disaggregated to the municipal and *circunscripción* level.

### Municipal Level Data

In addition to cross-departmental comparisons, this study further disaggregates Bolivian electoral data to the municipal level. This has the benefit not only of allowing an increase in the number of units of observation for each election (to a potential maximum of more than 300 units), it also allows us to control for the potentially over-determining effects

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<sup>295</sup> FUNDEMOS (Fundación Boliviana para la Capacitación Democrática y la Investigación) is a German-funded democratic assistance non-governmental organization supported by the Hanns Seidel Stiftung. Because the FUNDEMOS data sets were disaggregated below the municipal level, I was responsible for (manually) aggregating the data into municipalities; as such, any potential errors attributed to the data set are my own.

<sup>296</sup> See Jones 1995, Conaghan and Malloy 1995, Deheza 1998; and Gamarra 1996.



of large metropolitan cities in departments. On the other hand, limiting the number of municipalities (rather than using all municipalities) allows the researcher to select an appropriate number of municipalities that can serve as representative samples of inter-departmental differences, without over-determining outcomes. There are, of course, also practical considerations: First, the number of municipalities has changed since 1994, meaning that some of the potential units have not been held constant, which is problematic for panel-estimated regression models. Additionally, many of the municipalities created under Participación Popular cannot be easily aggregated using the FUNDEMOS (1998) data set. Thus, I have chosen to rely on a sample of municipalities that both offer a variety of inter-departmental regional differences but that are still objectively “accurate” across time when used for panel-estimated models.

Since *circunscripción*-level data is not available before 1997, municipal-level data allows for tests that go beyond departmental-level observations. This is necessary largely because department electoral data is over-determined by the capital cities and metropolitan areas. A disproportionate share of each department’s electorate resides in the administrative capital, making it difficult to distinguish between rural and urban electorates. Additionally, a large proportion of the Bolivian population resides in three metropolitan areas (La Paz-El Alto, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz). Though these figures have changed in the past two decades, these three highly urban, metropolitan areas have consistently made up the lion’s share of the national electorate (see Table 8.1). Of course, comparisons between 1985 and 2005 show a remarkable growth in the urban electorate—most notably the explosion in the size of the La Paz-El Alto metropolitan area. Looking at a broader section of municipalities outside the ten “capital” cities (including El Alto) allows for a look at differences between rural and urban electorates that are hidden when looking only at department-level data.

Table 8.1

Valid votes cast in “capital” cities, 1985 and 2005

City	1985		2005	
	as % of department	as % of national	as % of department	as % of national
Sucre (Chuquisaca)	40.0	2.2	58.2	3.2
La Paz	60.2	20.6	41.6	13.9
El Alto (La Paz)	1.5	0.5	31.8	10.7
Cochabamba	40.4	6.2	44.0	7.9
Oruro	57.2	3.8	62.9	3.5
Potosí	26.8	3.0	30.2	2.0
Santa Cruz	53.8	10.0	63.0	13.7
Trinidad (Beni)	30.0	1.0	33.7	1.2
Cobija (Pando)	31.4	0.2	57.0	0.4
Total for ten “capital” cities		47.5		58.9
Total for three metropolises (La Paz-El Alto, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz)		37.3		46.2

Data provided by Bolivia’s Corte Nacional Electoral and FUNDEMOS.

The thirty-two municipalities included in this study (see Table 8.2) were selected to meet the following criteria:

1. Reflect differences (in population size) between the various departments. This means, for example, that more samples were drawn from La Paz than from Pando.
2. Reflect geographic and/or cultural differences within each department. For example, each of the three additional municipalities selected from La Paz represent a different geographical region of the department: Achacachi lies near Lake Titicaca and is a bastion of *katarista* support; Coroico is in the Yungas tropical valley and has a large Afro-Bolivian population; and Calacoto is in the rural Altiplano, near Oruro.
3. Each municipality must have existed, without territorial changes, since 1985. This is important because many municipal boundaries were redrawn since 1994, including some cases of single municipalities being split into two or more new municipal units.

Table 8.2

Municipalities included in this study

<b>Chuquisaca</b>	<b>La Paz</b>	<b>Cochabamba</b>
Sucre	La Paz	Cochabamba
Muyupampa	El Alto	Villa Tunari
Camargo	Achacachi	Quillacollo
	Coroico	Aiquile
<b>Oruro</b>	Calacoto	
Oruro		<b>Tarija</b>
Curahuara	<b>Santa Cruz</b>	Tarija
Corque	Santa Cruz	Yacuiba
	Camiri	Villa San Lorenzo
<b>Potosí</b>	Vallegrande	
Potosí	San Jose de Chiquitos	<b>Beni</b>
Uncia		Trinidad
Tupiza	<b>Pando</b>	Magdalena
Llica	Cobija	Riberalta
	Puerto Gonzalo Moreno	Reyes

***Circunscripción* Level Data**

Additionally, this study disaggregates Bolivian electoral data from 1997-2005 by *circunscripción*. Since 1997, Bolivian voters have cast ballots for parliamentary representatives in single-seat, first-past-the-post uninominal districts. Because these districts are based (primarily) on population, the units are of much more comparable size than municipal-level units. A major limitation, of course, is that since these electoral districts did not exist prior to 1997, we can only compare data from that level in the latter two institutional periods.

Such data, however, allow us to make two different kinds of comparisons: 1) comparisons between elections and 2) comparisons within elections. That is, we can compare (as with our other data) voting trends by district from election to election, though this time with a larger number of units of observation ( $N=68$ ) than with merely department-level or municipal-level comparisons. But we can also compare votes cast for uninominal candidates to those for plurinominal (or “presidential”) lists within the same electoral district

in a single election. In the special case of the 2005 election, we can also compare presidential and uninominal legislative electorate behavior with prefectural votes.<sup>297</sup> One important caveat, however, is that because 2005 followed substantial redistricting of the *circunscripción* districts (which are set to be redistricted after each census), the ability to compare across institutional periods is somewhat less precise.

## Variables

This chapter analyses relationships between three types of variables: party system stability, institutional, and regional effects variables. As this overall study is concerned with political stability, and since my theoretical framework operates under the assumption that a stable political party system is necessary for stable democracy, the main concern here is to test the relationship between institutional variables on measures of party system stability (treated as dependent variables). The main goal is to determine whether statistical models support the assertion that the recent instability of Bolivia's party system is correlated with post-1993 institutional reforms. Additionally, I also test for regional effects, both to see whether there are notably different regional party systems and whether any such differences increased after the post-1993 institutional reforms.

### Party System Variables

The stability of Bolivia's party system is assessed using four key variables:

1. *Voter turnout*. Though voting is compulsory in Bolivia, voter turnout has shown marked differences across departments. Voter turnout has tended to be higher in *media luna*,

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<sup>297</sup> The 2005 general and prefectural elections provide a wealth of data, since each voter provides us with three pieces of information: their presidential vote, their uninominal vote, and their prefectural vote.

than in Andean, departments. While voter turnout figures may not say much about citizen's preferences, if cross-regional differences are statistically significant (when controlling for other factors) this may evidence different regional electorate behavioral patterns.

2. *Blank and null votes.* One simple measure of an institutionalized party system is the number of blank and null (or “spoiled”) ballots cast in any election. A high share of blank and null votes suggests that voters are dissatisfied with their options between the political parties campaigning for their votes—this is particularly important in countries (such as Bolivia) that have compulsory voting laws. The extent to which the number of blank and null votes varies across national subunits may also reflect relative degrees in party system institutionalization or consolidation. Additionally, a large number of blank and null votes may say something about the perceived legitimacy of the regime or the electoral process.<sup>298</sup>

3. *Degree of multipartism.* The degree of multipartism is measured using the effective number of parties measure developed by Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera (1979), based on vote shares in each election.<sup>299</sup> The “effective” number of parties (ENPV) is a more accurate measure of the number of political parties, since it uses weighted measures (correcting for the relative strength of parties), than simply counting the number of parties, some of which might not win enough votes to be “relevant.” Further, using disaggregated

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<sup>298</sup> For example, the high number of blank and null votes cast in Peru's 1995 election (59.5%) can be used as a measure of public dissatisfaction with the legitimacy of the electoral process, if not the regime itself.

<sup>299</sup> Measuring the effective number of parties using vote shares (ENPV), rather than by seat shares (ENPS), is more appropriate since legislative seats are allocated by department. Using vote shares also allows us to compare votes for single-seat contests (i.e. uninominal and prefectural ballots) with multi-seat contests (i.e. plurinominal ballots). ENPV is calculated as

$$\text{ENPV} = \frac{1}{\sum v_i^2}$$

where  $v$  is the vote share or the  $i$ -th party.

subnational-level party system measures allows for observable regional differences.

Interestingly, not only are ENPV measures different across subunits, department, municipal, and *circunscripción* measures also tend to be smaller than the national figure.

4. *Electoral volatility*. Another common indicator of party system stability is the measure for electoral volatility developed by Mogens Pedersen (1979), which determines the total net change of vote share between parties in sequential elections.<sup>300</sup> High electoral volatility indicates that a party system is not stable, since voters are frequently changing their support from one party to another. Because electoral volatility is measured as changes by comparing differences in votes between elections, the total number of observations is limited relative to other measures. While measures for departmental volatility in 1985 can be found by comparing to departmental votes in 1980, municipal-level data for 1980 is not available.<sup>301</sup> Likewise, volatility at the *circunscripción* level is not available for 1997, since such districts did not exist in 1993.

5. *Support for systemic parties*. Finally, a rough estimate for party system stability is developed by aggregating votes for the three systemic parties (MNR, ADN, MIR). The degree to which these three parties consistently captured a stable percentage of votes, both across time and between provinces, is a strong indicator of differences in voter preference structures. A reduction in votes for systemic parties—whether nationally or within specific

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<sup>300</sup> Electoral volatility is measured as

$$V = \frac{1}{2} \sum |p_i - p_{i-1}|$$

where  $p$  is the vote share for the  $i$ -th party in election  $t$ .

<sup>301</sup> FUNDEMOS (1998) data for the 1979 and 1980 elections merely disaggregate between *ciudad* (department capital) and *provincia* (the rural countryside) for each department; a notable exception is La Paz, which is disaggregated to the province level. Additionally, the 1979 and 1980 FUNDEMOS data is compiled from newspaper reports; official data for those elections are no longer available.

subunits—also suggests erosion in the ability of the traditional, systemic parties to represent civil society’s demands.

### **Institutional Variables**

This study looks at two key institutional variables:

1. *Post-1993 institutional change.* To test the hypothesis that party system stability was affected by institutional changes, especially the switch to MMP and the Participación Popular reforms, this study employs a simple dummy variable that codes as “1” the 1997 and 2002 elections, and codes as “0” the 1985, 1989, and 1993 elections. The models do not include 2005; although it also used the post-1993 institutional reforms, these followed a dramatic break (treated as an external “shock”) that may affect model performance.

2. *Effective threshold.* To control for electoral system differences across departments, I introduce the effective threshold measure proposed by Arend Lijphart (1994).<sup>302</sup> Effective thresholds are generally found to have strong effects on electoral behavior in proportional electoral systems; typically, higher electoral thresholds decrease proportionality, which encourages voters to avoid potential “losers,” which contributes to a smaller effective number of parties. Since the change to MMP also modified each department’s electoral threshold (increasing them), controlling for the effective electoral threshold (the minimum share of votes a party must win to secure at least one seat) separate the effects of institutional reforms from changes to the introduction of higher electoral thresholds on the party system dependent variables. Bolivia has used a 3% legal threshold in elections across

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<sup>302</sup> Electoral threshold is calculated as

$$T = \frac{75\%}{(M + 1)}$$

where  $M$  is the district magnitude (the number seats).

institutional periods (1993, 2002, and 2005), though these functioned at the national level. Since seats are won in department-level multi-seat districts based on various proportional representation formulas (across all elections) the real hurdle parties must overcome to win parliamentary representation is the departmental “effective” threshold. Using departmental electoral threshold also allows for some control between departments with different population sizes (and correspondingly, different number of parliamentary seats). Finally, this study assumes that the structural constraints of effective thresholds should also carry over into plurinominal votes in both the municipal and *circunscripción* level.

### Regional and Geographic Variables

This study also considers the potential effects of three geographic variables:

1. *Regional differences.* To test the hypothesis that electoral behavior is observably different between Andean and *media luna* departments, I develop a simple dummy variable that codes as “1” the *media luna* departments (Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni, and Pando), and codes as “0” the Andean departments (La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, and Potosí).<sup>303</sup> The same coding structure is applied to municipalities and *circunscripciones*, which are coded according to their corresponding department.

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<sup>303</sup> The department of Chuquisaca is not coded, and drops out of the analysis when using this variable. Political behavior in Chuquisaca does not easily fit either the *media luna* or Andean patterns. In part, the department has its own internal political logic—stemming primarily from its claim as the “constitutional” capital of Bolivia—that sets it against both regional blocs. With a larger number of indigenous residents (though overwhelmingly Quechua, rather than Aymara speakers) than the *media luna* departments, Chuquisaca does, in many ways, resemble an Andean department. Its relative political isolation from the La Paz-based Andean political economy, however, has often pitted the region’s political elite against the republic’s “administrative” capital. The recent expansion of Chuquisaca’s oil and natural gas fields has drawn the region closer to Santa Cruz and Tarija at times, but it has also resisted being drawn too close into that orbit, as well.



2. *Rural-urban differences.* Because there is reason to suspect that rural and urban electorates vote differently, it is important to test the effect of these differences on party system stability. Similarly, it allows us to control for contamination effects of rural-urban cleavages that may either obscure or over-determine regional differences (there are, on average, more rural voters in the *media luna* than in Andean departments). These measures are applied specifically to municipal-level data by using a dummy variable that codes as “1” the nine departmental capitals plus El Alto, and codes as “0” the other municipalities. The use of a simple dummy variable is preferred to using population figures, since some municipalities have relatively large populations but dispersed over a wide territory.<sup>304</sup> Using more precise population or registered voter figures would only obscure differences between rural and urban municipalities; instead, the municipalities are coded as “rural” or “urban” by the researcher.

3. *The metropole effect.* This variable seeks to further differentiate between voters who live merely in “cities” from those that live in “metropoles” (hyper-urban, densely-populated environments). The three major metropolitan areas in Bolivia are: the sister cities of La Paz and El Alto, the city of Cochabamba, and the city of Santa Cruz. Since nearly half of all Bolivian voters live and cast ballots in these three metropoles, their behavior in many ways drives the political process. This “metropole effect” is tested only in *circunscripción*-level analysis, where substantial differentiation can be made between districts that are urban but not metropolitan, from those that are urban and metropolitan, and from those that are primarily rural. Unlike municipalities, the division of the voting population between

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<sup>304</sup> For example, the number of registered voters in Achacachi (25,814) is higher than that in Cobija (14,157). But the majority of the residents of the capital of Pando live in an urban environment, whereas the majority of the residents of Achacachi live in outlying rural, *campesino* communities.

*circunscripciones* is more standardized, with nearly half of all districts drawn from the four metropolitan municipalities, and the rest drawn by combining municipalities into constituent blocs of comparable size.<sup>305</sup>

### The Statistical Models

To test for statistical correlations between regional and electoral system variables on the various party system variables, this chapter employs several panel-estimated time-series cross-sectional linear regression models. Three sets of panel data were compiled, based on the three disaggregated levels of data: department, municipality, and *circunscripción*. The datasets were then imported into the statistical software package, Stata, for analysis.<sup>306</sup> Two methods are used:

1. Between-effects estimated models to test for variations across units across time.
2. Random-effects (or “within-effects”) estimated models to test for variations within observational units across time.

While between-effects models test for regional differences between observational units in Andean and *media luna* departments, random-effects models test for the effects of post-1993 institutional changes within each of the units. Simply put, the between-effects models estimate correlations between the independent and dependent variables between panels across time using panel means. In contrast, the random-effects models are estimated across time within each of the panels and assume that panels are different from each other.

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<sup>305</sup> In the 1997 and 2002 elections, 20 of the 68 (29.4%) *circunscripciones* were drawn from the four metropolitan municipalities of La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. While the metropolitan voters are under-represented, the sample sizes are large enough for good comparisons.

<sup>306</sup> Specifically, Intercooled Stata, version 8.1.

Correspondingly, the reported  $N$  in between-effects models refers to the number of panels; in random-effects models, the reported  $N$  refers the total number of unit observations.

Department- and municipal-level models do not include 2005 data. This ensures that changes in electoral behavior introduced by the post-2003 crisis do not obscure differences between pre- and post-1993 changes in institutional framework. Data from the 2005 election is included in comparisons across single-seat districts (*circunscripciones*) using 1997-2005 data.

### Department-Level Models

Looking at departmental between-effects models, we see that the *media luna* dummy is statistically significantly correlated with a decrease in the effective number of parties, an increase in support for systemic parties, and a decrease in electoral volatility (see Table 8.3). The models suggest with some confidence that voters in *media luna* departments were more likely than voters in Andean departments to have a more consolidated or constrained party system (they supported fewer parties and had lower electoral volatility), even when controlling for differences in the effective electoral threshold across departments.<sup>307</sup> The most significant finding was that *media luna* voters supported the three systemic parties by an average of 17.32% across elections. None of the models that included Chuquisaca (in which *media luna* is dropped) showed any statistically significant correlations. Additionally, effective threshold only affected support for systemic parties, but the effect was only slight.

When in smaller sample models are run with between-effects estimators, the results are similar. In models including only pre-1997 elections the *media luna* dummy was statistically correlated with four dependent variables: it increased the share of valid votes, it

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<sup>307</sup> Because *media luna* departments have smaller populations, they tend to have higher effective thresholds than Andean departments.

decreased the effective number of parties, it increased vote share for systemic parties, and it decreased electoral volatility. In models including only the 1985 and 1989 elections, the *media luna* dummy significantly correlated with three dependent variables: it increased the share of valid votes, it decreased the effective number of parties, and it increased support for systemic parties. Interestingly, however, the *media luna* dummy fared poorly in models using only the 1993 and 1997 elections (the elections immediate before and after the institutional reforms). In these models, the *media luna* dummy was significantly correlated only with two dependent variables: it decreased the effective number of parties and it increased support for systemic parties. Comparing the 1985-1989 models to the 1993-1997 models, however, show little evidence for a significant effect in institutional change—when looking at department-level data. Instead, the evidence suggests that regional differences between *media luna* and Andean departments was a significant factor in Bolivian politics since the 1980s. In short, the reality of regionally different electorates seems to have been a background condition.

Table 8.3

Between-effects departmental panel-estimated regression models, 1985-2002

	Dependent Variables				
	Turnout	Blank & null vote	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Electoral volatility
Effective threshold	-0.09	0.00	-0.04	* 1.76	-1.41
<i>Media luna</i>	-1.05	-4.09	** -1.30	** 17.32	* -10.28
Constant	** 73.17	** 90.12	** 5.13	** 49.15	** 42.21
Probability > <i>F</i>	0.61	0.08	0.01	0.00	0.00
<i>N</i> (panels)	8	8	8	8	8

\*  $p > 0.05$

\*\*  $p > 0.01$

Looking at random-effects models across all departments (see Table 8.4), we see strong correlation between the institutional change dummy and four dependent variables: it decreases voter turnout, it increases the effective number of parties, it decreases support for systemic parties, and it increases electoral volatility. Changes in effective threshold were significantly correlated only with two dependent variables: an increase in effective thresholds increased support for systemic parties and decreased electoral volatility. On the surface, the models suggest that there was a significant change in electoral behavior within departments across institutional periods.

Table 8.4

Random-effects departmental panel-estimated regression models, 1985-2002

	Dependent Variables				
	Turnout	Blank & null vote	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Electoral volatility
Effective threshold	0.05	-0.34	-0.10	** 3.87	** -2.55
Institutional change	** -5.37	-1.58	** 0.67	** -15.88	** 12.74
Constant	** 73.91	** -89.25	** 3.81	** 51.26	37.28
Probability > $X^2$	0.00	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00
$N$ (observations)	45	45	45	45	36
* $p > 0.05$ ** $p > 0.01$					

If we compare separate Andean and *media luna* random-effects models, we notice that the effects of institutional change were not even (see Table 8.5). While the effects of the independent variables were similar across both regions, there are noticeable differences in the coefficients. Again, *media luna* models performed better, with more statistically significant

effects and higher  $X^2$  values than Andean models. While the institutional change dummy was significantly related to support for systemic parties and electoral volatility in both regions, the difference was remarkable. Support for systemic parties in post-1993 elections decreased in Andean departments at roughly twice the rate, on average, as in *media luna* departments. Likewise, electoral volatility increased after 1993 in Andean departments nearly twice as much as in the *media luna*. Interestingly, while institutional change seemed to drive down voter turnout overall, it did not significantly affect voter turnout in the Andes, though it significantly decreased voter turnout in the *media luna*.

Table 8.5

Regional random-effects departmental regression models, 1985-2002

	Dependent Variables				
	Turnout	Blank & null vote	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Electoral volatility
Effective threshold	0.90 1.80	0.19 0.02	0.07 ** -0.08	2.23 ** 1.73	-0.30 ** -1.83
Institutional change	-2.52 ** -9.00	-2.43 -1.14	0.48 ** 0.77	** -20.87 ** -10.46	** 15.80 ** 8.88
Constant	** 71.26 ** 79.01	** -89.97 ** -93.90	** 4.46 ** 3.76	** 55.44 ** 70.91	** 29.55 ** 30.54
Probability > $X^2$	0.41 0.00	0.35 0.59	0.16 0.00	0.00 0.00	0.03 0.00
N (observations)	20 20	20 20	20 20	20 20	16 16

\*  $p > 0.05$

\*\*  $p > 0.01$

Coefficients for models run using only Andean departments are on top; coefficients for models run using only *media luna* departments are on the bottom. Chuquisaca was not included in the models.

Overall, department-level data supports the research hypothesis: change in institutional structure increased electoral volatility and decreased support for systemic

parties. While between-effects models suggest that regional differences were already significant since the 1980s, the random-effects models demonstrate that these differences were further increased by the post-1993 institutional change. In short, pre-existing regional cleavages sharpened after changes to the political institutional framework were introduced. Between the two institutional periods, support for systemic parties declined significantly, but the decline was much more pronounced in the Andes than in the *media luna*.

### **Municipal-Level Models**

Looking at municipal-level data allows us to do two things: expand the number of observations and consider differences between urban and rural electorates. Using municipal-level electoral data, the *media luna* dummy is again statistically significant across most models (see Table 8.6). The only exception is the lack of any significant correlation between *media luna* and voter turnout, though in these models we see a significant correlation with a decrease in blank and null votes (which we did not see in department-level models). These models again suggest important regional differences. In *media luna* municipalities the effective number of parties tends to be lower, support for systemic parties is higher, and electoral volatility is lower—even when controlling for differences in department size.<sup>308</sup> There were also significant differences between urban and rural municipalities, but only with regards to voter turnout (higher in urban municipalities) and blank and null votes (lower in urban municipalities). Urban voters appear more likely to vote and to actually vote for a political party, but there is no significant difference in party system preferences along this dimension alone.

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<sup>308</sup> Since the municipal-level data is merely disaggregated department electoral data, I assume that the effects of district magnitude and effective threshold carry over.

In random-effects municipal models, we find that institutional change is again the more powerful electoral system variable (see Table 8.7). Surprisingly, even in larger- $N$  multivariate models that include an institutional change dummy the effective threshold has only limited statistically significant effect. Higher effective thresholds lowered voter turnout and increased votes shares for systemic parties slightly, but in both models the  $p$  value showed only marginal significant, when compared to values for the MMP dummy, which were consistently stronger. Data from the 2005 election was again dropped from the support systemic parties and electoral volatility model and we again see that the change to MMP drove up electoral volatility and reduced the number of votes for systemic parties.

Table 8.6

Between-effects municipal panel-estimated regression models, 1985-2002

	Dependent Variables				
	Turnout	Blank & null vote	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Electoral volatility
Effective threshold	0.28	-0.02	0.75	1.47	-0.72
<i>Media luna</i>	1.88	** -4.09	** -1.10	** 22.96	** -15.26
Urban	** 4.76	** -3.00	0.18	2.25	-3.42
Constant	** 72.50	** - 88.98	** 4.36	** 45.80	** 49.95
Probability > $F$	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
$N$ (panels)	29	29	29	29	29
* $p > 0.05$	** $p > 0.01$				

Looking at separate regional models, we again notice dramatic differences between the magnitude of the effects between Andean and *media luna* electorates. The most important and striking difference, of course, concerns the relationship between institutional change and support for systemic parties. As with department-level models, the institutional change



dummy had the expected effect of lowering support for systemic parties. Additionally, the difference in coefficients between Andean and *media luna* municipalities was even higher; Andean municipal voters, on average, decreased their support for systemic parties at nearly three times the rate of *media luna* voters.

Table 8.7

Random-effects municipal panel-estimated regression models, 1985-2002

	Dependent Variables				
	Turnout	Blank & null vote	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Electoral volatility
Effective threshold	0.33	-0.44	-0.09	** 4.34	** -2.66
Institutional change	** -8.68	** -1.75	0.12	** -14.15	** 5.94
Constant	** 77.94	** -88.60	** 4.40	** 47.75	** 48.97
Probability > $X^2$	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.00	0.00
N (observations)	158	158	158	158	128
* $p > 0.05$ ** $p > 0.01$					

Overall, municipal-level data again supports the research hypothesis: change in institutional structure increased electoral volatility and decreased support for systemic parties. It is important to point out that across all the department- and municipal-level models, those that looked at support for systemic parties were statistically the most robust models. Thus, the finding that support for systemic parties decreased in post-1993 elections by significant—and dramatic—levels supports this study's hypothesis; changes in the institutional structure significantly undermined the existing party system and support for the three parties most representative of that system. Additionally, though the data demonstrates pre-existing regional differences between Andean and *media luna* electorates, the models also

demonstrate that these differences were sharpened after the changes to the institutional framework were introduced in the mid-1990s.

Table 8.8  
Regional random-effects municipal regression models, 1985-2002

	Dependent Variables				
	Turnout	Blank & null vote	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Electoral volatility
Effective threshold	-0.33 0.28	0.14 0.06	* 0.20 -0.05	2.69 ** 1.31	-1.57 -0.58
Institutional change	** -8.07 ** -9.76	** -2.60 0.65	-0.28 ** 0.37	** -19.71 ** -7.47	5.28 * 7.78
Constant	** 79.72 ** 79.81	** -89.50 ** -93.48	** 3.77 ** 3.60	** 49.53 ** 73.54	** 49.73 ** 28.77
Probability > $X^2$	0.00 0.00	0.02 0.66	0.02 0.01	0.00 0.00	0.19 0.03
N (observations)	79 64	79 64	79 64	79 64	64 52

\*  $p > 0.05$       \*\*  $p > 0.01$

Coefficients for models run using only Andean departments are on top; coefficients for models run using only *media luna* departments are on the bottom. Chuquisaca was not included in the models.

### ***Circunscripción*-Level Models**

The richest models are those drawn from *circunscripción*-level data. Because single-seat districts were drawn up to be roughly equal in size (at least within departments), they are much more comparable than departments or municipalities. And thanks to the differentiated data provided by the Corte Nacional Electoral, the models also allow for tests within each election: we can test the effects of broader electoral system and geographic constraints on voters in two ways by comparing plurinominal and uninominal votes. There are, however, significant limitations to *circunscripción*-level data. First, the data only cover the latter two

institutional periods and cannot give us any new information about differences between electorate behavior before and after changes to the institutional framework. Second, because of this limitation, electoral volatility data for 1997 is not available (since there is no 1993 data to compare it against). Nevertheless, *circunscripción*-level data can further inform us about regional differences, about differences between “presidential” (plurinominal) and “district representative” (uninominal) votes, and make rich comparisons between 2002 and 2005 elections.

Table 8.9

Between-effects *circunscripción* panel regression models, using plurinominal data

	Dependent Variables			
	1997-2002		2002-2005	
	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties
Effective threshold	-0.03	** 2.96	0.01	** 2.75
<i>Media luna</i>	* -0.45	** 23.09	0.25	** 30.00
Metropole	0.11	1.77	* 0.40	4.38
Constant	** 4.54	** 29.04	** 3.04	** 15.14
Probability > <i>F</i>	0.04	0.00	0.09	0.00
<i>N</i> (panels)	62	62	65	65
* <i>p</i> > 0.05	** <i>p</i> > 0.01			

Looking at between-effects models using only plurinominal *circunscripción*-level data, we notice relationships similar to those found in previous models (see Table 8.9). Looking at separate 1997-2002 and 2002-2005 models, we see that the *media luna* dummy is again a strong predictor of support for systemic parties. Interestingly, the more narrowly-defined metropole dummy yielded no statistically significant results when run in multivariate models;

it was also not a significant predictor in models that dropped the *media luna* dummy. This suggests that metropolitan life is not a good indicator of political behavior by itself; regional differences between the Andes and the *media luna* are much more important.

If we look at uninominal votes (see Table 8.10), we see remarkably similar results with regards to support for systemic party candidates. Interestingly, although departmental effective thresholds have no impact on plurality winners in single-seat districts, the models show a significant relationship between departmental thresholds (which apply only to plurinominal votes) and support for systemic parties in uninominal votes. In part, this is because there is considerably little inter-ballot volatility.<sup>309</sup> While it is unclear which section of the ballot is driving electorate behavior, votes for both portions of the ballot are remarkably consistent.

Table 8.10

Between-effects *circunscripción* panel regression models, using uninominal data

	Dependent Variables			
	1997-2002		2002-2005	
	Inter-ballot volatility	Support for systemic parties	Inter-ballot volatility	Support for systemic parties
Effective threshold	-0.26	** 2.92	0.27	** 2.82
<i>Media luna</i>	-1.11	** 21.30	-1.95	** 27.61
Metropole	* 3.54	4.56	2.46	5.49
Constant	** 13.96	** 32.47	** 13.08	** 19.67
Probability > <i>F</i>	0.01	0.00	0.22	0.00
<i>N</i> (panels)	62	62	65	65
* $p > 0.05$	** $p > 0.01$			

<sup>309</sup> I calculated “inter-ballot volatility” by treating the aggregate plurinominal and uninominal votes as a separate “events” and calculating the aggregate difference using the formula for electoral volatility.

To test for split ticket voting, I ran a series of diagnostic models; these did not show split ticket voting between plurinominal and uninominal portions of the ballot. In all the models from 1997 and 2002, support for systemic parties was highly correlated across both ballots with small coefficients (1.14 in 1997 and 1.01 in 2002), even when controlling for potential regional effects (the multivariate individual-year regression models included both the *media luna* and metropole dummies). This means that, within the *circunscripciones*, a once percent increase plurinominal (or “presidential”) votes tended to increase votes for that party’s uninominal candidates by roughly the same amount. When single-party models were run, the results were roughly similar: in every case, votes for the party’s plurinominal list was correlated with votes for the party’s uninominal candidate and with coefficients again close to the order of one-to-one relationships. Some notable exceptions: 1997 plurinominal votes for Condepa drove up votes for the party’s uninominal candidate by nearly two percent (every one percent increase in plurinominal votes raised the uninominal share by 1.98%); 1997 plurinominal votes for NFR drop up the party’s uninominal vote by only 0.78%. Overall, the results suggest that uninominal votes are less (not more) likely to be cast for significant parties (average effective number of parties measures were also smaller across uninominal ballots). In the final analysis, there is little evidence of split ticket voting in 1997 and 2002, though there is considerable evidence for regional differences across electorates.

One interesting feature of the diagnostic single-election, single-party linear regression models was that in some instances the *media luna* and metropole dummies did affect uninominal votes—even when controlling for plurinominal votes. In uninominal contests across *circunscripciones* in 1997, *media luna* voters were more likely to vote for ADN (by 3.74%) and less likely to vote for MIR (by -9.75%) and metropole voters were more likely to vote

for MIR (by 4.58%), more likely to vote for Condepa (by 0.98%), more likely to vote for UCS (by 3.66%), and less likely to vote for IU (by -2.34%). Interestingly, in 1997 there was no significant regional affect on electoral support for the MNR. Surprisingly, the 2002 models showed no regional relationship between—when controlling for plurinominal votes.

Table 8.11

Linear regression estimates of support for uninominal candidates, 1997-2002

Uninominal vote for party (Adjusted R-square)	1997		2002	
	<i>Media luna</i> dummy	Metropole dummy	<i>Media luna</i> dummy	Metropole dummy
MNR (0.49, 0.39)	** 11.97	* -3.51	** 14.85	-0.70
ADN (0.08, 0.29)	* 6.88	4.49	** 10.30	-4.04
MIR (0.01, 0.08)	2.21	-2.83	** 7.53	1.34
NFR (—, 0.35)	—	—	* -4.21	** 9.57
Condepa (0.35, —)	** -15.08	** 10.41	—	—
UCS (0.13, 0.02)	** 6.46	2.23	2.53	1.65
IU/MAS (0.11, 0.38)	** -8.14	-6.10	** -20.24	** -10.68
Eje/MIP (0.18, 0.10)	** -1.90	** -2.22	** -8.36	-0.66
N (observations)	62	62	62	62

\*  $p > 0.05$

\*\*  $p > 0.01$

Adjusted R-square figures in parenthesis are listed as (1997, 2002).

In contrast, when looking at models that looked only at regional effects (*media luna* and metropole dummies) on uninominal votes, we see strong regional effects—particularly with the *media luna* dummy (see Table 8.11). Again, we see strong regional differences in

support for systemic parties overall. Particularly, voters in *media luna* uninominal districts were significantly more likely to vote for MNR or ADN candidates and least likely to vote for IU/MAS or Condepa candidates. One interesting development in these tables, of course, is that while IU and Condepa drew the largest share of Andean votes in 1997, their voters came from different rural-urban constituencies (Condepa's support among metropolitan areas is highly driven by its support in the La Paz-El Alto metropolitan area).

Table 8.12

Linear regression estimates of support for parties, 2005

	Dependent Variables			
	MNR	Podemos	MAS	Unidad Nacional
Effective threshold	0.12 -0.26	** 1.95 ** 2.23	** -2.52 ** -2.78	** 1.06 ** 1.34
<i>Media luna</i>	** 12.44	** 19.58	** -33.09	** 4.48
	** 14.41	** 17.07	** -28.01	** 7.13
Metropole	* -4.28	** 11.05	* 8.26	** 6.18
	** -7.29	** 12.03	-6.95	** 6.58
Constant	** 4.31	** 8.58	** 78.48	-0.89
	** 7.91	* 7.08	** 67.57	0.46
Adjusted R-square	0.59 0.52	0.62 0.61	0.74 0.66	0.50 0.32
N (observations)	64	64	64	64

\*  $p > 0.05$

\*\*  $p > 0.01$

Plurinominal figures are on top; uninominal figures are on the bottom.

Again, comparing across *circunscripciones* we see a growing regional polarization between 1997 and 2002. By 2002, systemic parties—particularly the MNR and ADN—are highly entrenched in *media luna* electoral districts, just as MAS and other anti-systemic forces have become entrenched in Andean districts. And as with department- and municipal-level data, the *circunscripción*-level data give strong evidence that the key “geographic” cleavage is

not between urban and rural differences, but between regional ones. Looking at similar single-year linear regression models for the 2005, we see more evidence to support this assertion (see Table 8.12). Even after 2003, *media luna* voters were more likely to vote for an MNR uninominal candidate (and with a coefficient little different from 2002). What we see in 2005, however, is that while *media luna* supporters are more likely to support three of the most significant parties of the 2005 electoral contests, Andean voters have concentrated their support on one party: MAS.

On the whole, *circunscripción*-level data confirms that the post-2003 collapse of the party system is least pronounced in the *media luna* than in Andean Bolivia. While systemic parties like the MNR are no longer strong players at the “national” level, local attachment to systemic parties has changed little across much of the *media luna*. In part, this can be qualitatively observed: well-known ADN and MIR members have flocked to Podemos, swelling that party’s uninominal and plurinominal candidate lists in 2005. Much of the political campaign organization that supported local Podemos candidates were simply the old ADN and MIR political machines. Likewise, large sections of the *media luna* electorate still rallied behind the MNR. A closer look at the 2005 prefecture elections helps illustrate how support for systemic parties remains in the *media luna* by looking at the new local dimension of Bolivian politics.

### **The 2005 Prefectural Elections: A Closer Look**

The prefectural election results, discussed in Chapter 7, demonstrate the regional political polarization in post-2003 Bolivia. Jorge Quiroga’s Podemos, the principal anti-MAS political organization did better across the *media luna*, where Evo Morales fared least well as a presidential candidate. But the results also demonstrate that MAS did not completely capture



the Andean space. Despite Morales' overwhelming victory in departments like La Paz (66.63%), Cochabamba (64.84%), Oruro (62.58%), and Potosí (57.80%), his party's prefectural candidates did not do as well. In La Paz and Cochabamba, cornerstones of pro-Morales electoral support, Podemos candidates won. Taking a historical perspective, the data suggest two things: First, the majority of *media luna* voters rejected Evo Morales and rallied around either Tuto Quiroga and Podemos or (in smaller number) the MNR. Second, as in previous elections, Andean electorates demonstrated substantially higher rates of electoral volatility than *media luna* electorates. In short, *media luna* regional party systems were dramatically altered, but not in a fundamental way; the core elites continued to dominate, though now more heavily concentrated into one coalition: Podemos. In contrast, Andean regional party systems had moved away from systemic parties, but not completely; the party system had radically dealigned from the pre-2003 status quo, but had not yet settled into a new party system.

In various prefectural election models, we see that the *media luna* dummy is again the strongest independent variable for predicting *circunscripción*-level electorate behavior. The models in Table 8.13 show that even when controlling for the metropole effect and the departments legislative effective threshold (a proxy variable for “department size”), *media luna* voters were more likely to vote for systemic parties (Podemos or MNR). Interestingly, only in prefectural electoral models do we see any statistically significant difference between rural and metropolitan *circunscripciones*. In part, this helps explain the victories of José Luis Paredes (La Paz) and Manfred Reyes Villa (Cochabamba); their victory was in large measure a product of metropolitan voters, who are more likely to be from middle-class backgrounds than voters in more rural communities. But the combined metropole and *media luna* effect

supports the conventional wisdom that the strongest anti-MAS political bastion is the city of Santa Cruz.

Another interesting finding involves the model using “split ticket voting” (measured as the volatility between prefectural and presidential votes) as the dependent variable. Again, both the *media luna* and metropole dummies are statistically significant. Consistent with the evidence that *media luna* electorates vote more consistently, the models suggests that *media luna* voters were less likely to vote differently for president (their plurinominal vote) and prefect candidates. Interestingly, however, metropolitan voters were more likely to switch votes—even though votes for AUN (in Cochabamba) were coded as “Podemos.”

Table 8.13

Linear regression estimates for prefectural votes, across *circunscripciones*

	Dependent Variables			
	Blank & null vote	Effective number of parties	Support for systemic parties	Split-ticket voting
Effective threshold	** 0.51	-0.07	-0.17	0.02
<i>Media luna</i>	** 4.07	* -0.34	** 33.90	** -11.38
Metropolitan	** 6.48	** -0.54	** 13.83	** 13.97
Constant	** 85.92	** 3.59	** 34.96	** 29.84
Adjusted R-square	0.55	0.16	0.68	0.39
<i>N</i> (observations)	64	64	64	64
* $p > 0.05$ ** $p > 0.01$				

Because the model testing split-ticket voting had a relatively low R-square value, I have included a second set of linear regression models that look for correlations between votes in prefectural ballots to plurinominal ballots between specific parties (see Table 8.14). The first model simply looks at aggregate “pro-systemic” votes. Subsequent models at three

specific parties: MAS, Podemos, and the MNR. Not surprisingly, again we see *media luna* as a strong predictor for within-*circunscripción* votes. Voters in the *media luna* were more likely to vote for systemic prefecture candidates—and by significant margins, which is surprising since pro-Podemos candidates won in two Andean departments. Another surprising result was that metropolitan voters were more likely to support MNR candidates, despite the MNR’s only electoral victory was in the non-metropolitan department of Tarija. The findings do suggest, however, that a significant number of middle class voters still support the MNR (if we assume that middle class voter are much more likely to live in cities). As with previous models drawn from presidential and legislative election data, we see substantial evidence for pronounced regional political differences.

Table 8.14

Linear regression estimates for party prefectural votes, across *circunscripciones*

	Dependent Variables			
	Support for systemic candidates	Support for MAS candidates	Support for Podemos candidates	Support for MNR candidates
Effective threshold	-0.17	** -2.34	1.52	0.43
<i>Media luna</i>	** 33.90	** -17.37	** 19.41	** 10.09
Metropolitan	** 13.83	** -11.75	4.21	** 17.92
Constant	** 34.96	** 53.26	* 14.38	* 13.86
Adjusted R-square	0.68	0.54	0.29	0.36
N (observations)	64	64	64	51
* $p > 0.05$ ** $p > 0.01$				

### Concluding Remarks

Most of the statistical models above demonstrate a significant regional difference between *media luna* and Andean electorates. Yet these differences also clearly increased in the post-1993 period. That is, already-existing regional differences became more pronounced after the introduction of changes to the country's institutional framework. Although reforms like Participación Popular and the introduction of uninominal (single-seat district) legislative representatives were meant (by those who crafted them) to improve the quality of Bolivia's democracy, they nevertheless had some unintended consequences. Rather than increase the publicly perceived legitimacy of the party system, strengthening their role in institutional democratic politics, the reforms seem to have instead contributed to the gradual erosion of support for existing political parties—particularly among large segments of the Andean electorate.

These findings should not automatically condemn such well-intentioned reforms or similar attempts at “constitutional engineering” in new democracies. There is considerable evidence that Participación Popular was, on the whole, an important success. If anything, the current political climate in Bolivia suggests that the country's citizens want more—not less—of such reforms. Calls for different kinds of “autonomy” come not only from the *media luna*, but also from indigenous communities in both the Altiplano and the Amazon basin. Most likely the new Bolivian constitution will even further decentralize the state and devolve even more authority (political, economic, social, and even cultural) to local communities. But these findings do suggest that such reforms may further divide Bolivians. The common discussions about “two Bolivia's”—both in the press and among academics—suggests that this socio-cultural division is becoming increasingly reified.

## CHAPTER 9

### LESSONS FROM THE BOLIVIAN CASE

The ongoing Bolivian crisis has not occurred in isolation. Numerous observers have commented on Latin America's recent "shift to the left" as anti-neoliberal candidates and movements have emerged across the region. Bolivia's Evo Morales has frequently been lumped together with Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, Peru's Ollanta Humala, Ecuador's Rafael Correa, and even Brazil's Luis Inácio de Silva ("Lula") and Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Additionally, several Andean republics have experienced a series of democratic setbacks in the last several years. These have included the rise of authoritarian executives like Peru's Alberto Fujimori and the constant, chronic instability of Ecuador. Even Venezuela, a bastion of democratic politics in the 1960s and 1970s saw its party system collapse and give rise to Hugo Chávez.

In light of the historical trajectory of Andean democracies, Bolivia nevertheless stands out: Bolivia's democratic system was stable for nearly two decades; its party system and its parliamentarized presidential institutional design incorporated populist movements and weathered severe socioeconomic pressures. Even the 2003 crisis did not destroy Bolivia's democratic institutions. Morales did not come to power through a coup, but through elections, and he leads a fairly institutionalized party that is more than personal vehicle (unlike Fujimori's Cambio 90 or Chávez's Movimiento Quinta República). More importantly, Morales' election in December 2005 did not give completely obliterate his opposition, and he has not (yet) taken any steps to suspend the legislature or take other more overtly authoritarian moves. Similarly, the July 2006 constituent assembly elections were free

and fair; the opposition (led by Podemos and the MNR) have ensured that the constituent assembly will not be a rubber stamp, but rather a genuine forum for constructing a new constitution and addressing serious political questions. In short, Bolivia's democracy is still at a delicate moment, but it has not yet collapsed.

### **Representation on Stilts**

It is overly simplistic to define the Bolivian crisis as a "crisis of representation." Such a view assumes that Bolivia's democracy was primarily elite-based and did not represent the interests of "the Bolivian people." Such claims, however, often ignore that any "people" is itself a social construct, a historical artifact. By paying careful attention to the sociological and anthropological literature on nationalism, we can better inform comparative political studies of popular movements. In other words, the issue is not necessarily a question of whether an elite does not represent the *demos*. Rather, we should pay more attention to how any *demos* is itself constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed. In short, we need to develop a more dynamic theory of the *demos*—or "democratic citizenship"—that can be applied to the study of political crises, such as the recent Bolivian case.

It would be an error to assume that my metaphor of Bolivia as a "democracy on stilts" implies that Bolivian democracy was simply an elitist democracy of the kind described by Joseph Schumpeter (1943) or Robert Michels (1915). While the metaphor accurately suggests that Bolivia's democracy was, from 1985 through 2003, maintained primarily by an elite consensus involving members of the Bolivian political class, these elites did not see themselves as a privileged or technocratic elite. Instead, Bolivia's political class made significant attempts to improve the quality of democracy through reforms meant to increase the quality of representation (e.g. adopting a mixed-member electoral system) and devolving

state authority to local levels (e.g. Participación Popular). Ironically, of course, these attempts at reform contributed to a growing crisis of legitimacy and weakened the party system. Thus, this study echoes the recent contributions by Robert Barr (2005) and Scott Mainwaring (2006) who argue that the Andean political crises—of which Bolivia is a case—increased popular expectations beyond the state’s capacity to meet them.

But where Mainwaring (2006) sees problems of “state deficiencies” as a means to explain the Andean crises of the past several years, my study instead probes a deeper issue. Clearly, the Central Andean states lacked strong, efficient states. But, like economic factors and indigenous mobilization, this answer alone cannot explain the Bolivian crises—and certainly not its timing. The Bolivian state was surely weaker than the Peruvian state, yet the Peruvian state went into crisis more than a decade before Bolivia. Similarly, one can hardly attribute “state deficiencies” as a primary factor in the Chilean crisis of 1970-1973 or the Venezuelan crisis of the 1990s. Again, Bolivia’s “exceptionalism”—its stability during the 1980s-1990s in the face of adverse conditions and its crisis after 2003, following a series of remarkable social and institutional reforms—allows us to more deeply explore factors that contribute to a crisis of legitimacy.

Here, the metaphor of “democracy on stilts” conveys two additional, but equally important, meanings: First, the metaphor refers to the fragile nature of democracy itself, in any historical context. The metaphor reminds us that the institutions supporting democracy, which are regularly at a distance “above” ordinary citizens, are also fragile. Modern history is littered with examples of democracies that have fallen down, their institutional “stilts” kicked out from under them, often by their own people. Many scholars frequently remind us that new democracies are fragile. But the very discussion of “consolidated” democracies often blinds us to the reality that democratization is a continuous, dynamic, and potentially

surprising process. After all, by the late 1990s several scholars, including the venerable Juan Linz, had proclaimed Bolivia a consolidated democracy.<sup>310</sup> Yet within years, this consolidated democracy entered into a profound crisis.

Second, the metaphor of “democracy on stilts” also echoes Jeremy Bentham’s crude but famous retort that arguments in favor of natural rights were nothing but “nonsense on stilts.” Though my study does not address Bentham’s question, the metaphor is borrowed from him in a theoretical regard as well: The “nonsense on stilts” in this sense is the disjunction between comparative political studies of democratization and comparative sociological studies of nation building. Clearly, our discipline tends to assume that modern democracies are also nation-states. And though numerous scholars—in both the subfields of comparative politics and political theory—address questions of identity, ethnic cleavages, culture, or even subalternity, these rarely delve into the fundamental questions of how these “national imaginaries” are constructed in the ways addressed by Benedict Anderson (1991), Eric Hobsbawm (1992), or Ernest Gellner (1983). This dissertation has only scratched the surface by calling attention to the need to explore issues of how nations are constructed and deconstructed, and their relevance to modern democratic theory. For too long, the study of new democracies has been suspended in the air on the assumption (the “stilts”) that democratic states represent a commonly conceived national *demos*. The Bolivian case

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<sup>310</sup> While Linz references Bolivia as a case of successful democratic consolidation in his seminal essay “Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does It Make a Difference?” (Linz 1994), his opinion on Bolivia remained unchanged for some time. I met Linz at a conference at the University of Notre Dame in December 1999—the conference that produced *The Architecture of Democracy* (Reynolds 2002)—and during a smoking break, asked him directly whether he considered Bolivia a case of successful democratic consolidation (as I did at the time); he emphatically answered that it was.



demonstrates that democratic stability depends as much on good institutions as it does on a citizenry that shares a common imaginary.

### **Reconsidering Institutional Engineering**

The Bolivian case also highlights both the opportunities and dangers of “institutional engineering.” On the one hand, institutional engineering can strengthen democracy, both anchoring its “stilts” firmly in grass roots civil society and transforming them into better channels of popular representation. On the other hand, institutional engineering can also destabilize the social foundations of democracy by undermining the popular imaginary necessary to maintain democratic legitimacy. Of course, non-democratic states may also attempt to foster a sense of national identity among their subjects. I am not suggesting that popular imaginaries should be static and unchanging in defense to state authority. Instead, what the Bolivian case demonstrates is that “popular,” “civic,” or “national” imaginaries are historical-cultural artifacts. As such, they are both cause and effect: just as institutions affect political culture, changing it in new (and often unexpected) ways, the changes in political culture affect the way institutions function. Because democratic states are not experimental “laboratories,” careful attention to these issues is essential.

Throughout the 1990s, Bolivia was a laboratory for institutional engineering. Bolivian elites were not deaf to popular demands for greater political representation. If anything, Bolivia epitomized regional Latin American efforts in the hopeful 1990s to improve political representation and increase popular participation through various institutional reforms. The sweeping reforms made during the first Sánchez de Lozada administration suggest a considerable preoccupation by political elites over issues of representation and participation. The 1994 Ley de Participación Popular was an international

success story. One of the first centralized Latin American state to engage in significant political devolution, Bolivia became a model for other regional reformers.<sup>311</sup> Subsequent years saw continued efforts devoted to the critical evaluation of the successes (and failures) of Participación Popular. Even in the midst of the 2003 crisis, Bolivian political elites, social scientists, international and local non-governmental organization representatives, and leaders of social movements regularly met at conferences hosted by the various Bolivian think tanks—usually ILDIS—to discuss issues of participation, representation, and political decentralization.<sup>312</sup>

One of the most active Bolivian think tanks has been ILDIS, which publishes (among other things) conference proceedings and short analytical monographs for the past two decades. Monograph topics have included: evaluations of the performance of uninominal deputies (Ardaya Salinas 2003), citizens' access to political information (Soruco and Eyzaguirre 1999), evaluations of levels of citizen participation (Vacaflor et al 1999), studies of territorial representation (Zegada 1998), issues of governability (Oporto Castro 1998), and problems of representation (Verdesoto and Ardaya 1997; Rojas Ortuste and Zuazo 1996; Lazarte 1993). Most recently, ILDIS has published two large multi-authored volumes on the possibility—and challenges to—regional decentralization. The first is a

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<sup>311</sup> The Venezuelan publisher, Nueva Sociedad (one of the most significant regional publishers of political commentary and analysis), published a series of critical essays and analyses of Bolivia's Participación Popular (MDN-SNPP 1997). Edited by Bolivia's Secretaria Nacional de Participación Popular, it was deliberately marketed by both the Bolivian government and the editorial staff of Nueva Sociedad as a new, revolutionary regional model. For a sense of comparison: its journal *Nueva Sociedad* occupies the same position in Latin America as the *Journal of Democracy* does in the United States.

<sup>312</sup> I attended such a conference in April 2004 in the city of La Paz. Participants included two cabinet ministers, three indigenous leaders, several mid-level bureaucrats, and researchers attached to various institutions, including: ILDIS, CEBEM, USAID, and various NGOs. At the conference, social scientists from Spain, Brazil, and Colombia gave presentations on their "models" of decentralization.

collection of essays by members of the first conference on decentralization (Quiroga and Requena 2003); the second is a series of in-depth interviews of Bolivian political and intellectual elites (Ayo 2004); a third volume on the second decentralization conference (which I attended in April 2004) is set to follow. Alongside ILDIS, other Bolivian think tanks—most notably the Fundación Milenio and CEBEM (through its publisher, Plural)—have also actively participated in academic study, analysis, and publications concerning the quality of Bolivian democratic politics. There is a small, but flourishing, number of Bolivian social scientists who regularly publish work on the nature of Bolivian democracy, its social and political institutions, and who discuss potential reforms meant to improve the quality of democracy. There is little evidence of an inattentive political and intellectual elite (the two groups often blur together).

It is in this context that the adoption of a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system must be understood. Bolivian political elites were actively debating constitutional reforms in the 1980s and 1990s. And this debate was not oblivious to the larger discussions taking place in the discipline of political science. Bolivian scholars were familiar with the works of Juan Linz, Alfred Stepan, Dieter Nohlen, Arend Lijphart, and other exemplars of the “constitutional engineering” school. Several of them (including a team led by Juan Linz) were invited to Bolivia to discuss constitutional reforms. Analyses of the debates leading up to the new constitution were published shortly after the new constitution was ratified (Honorable Senado de Bolivia 1994), with essays by prominent social scientists and politicians. Only months after October 2003, Carlos Böhrt published his *Reingeniería Constitucional en Bolivia* (2004), which included theoretical discussions on constitutional reform and specific discussion of the Bolivian case in historical perspective; in

short, it was a handbook for Bolivian constitutional engineers with an eye to the July 2006 constituent assembly elections.

The MMP reforms were thus part of a broader package of reforms that reshaped the relationship between the Bolivian democratic state and its citizens. The change to MMP, therefore, cannot be easily disentangled—whether in its intention and its actual effects—from the other elements of constitutional engineering in the 1990s. For that reason I am hesitant to declare that switching to an MMP electoral system may have negative consequences, in terms of continued democratic stability. Clearly, other new MMP regimes, such as Mexico, Lesotho, and New Zealand, have fared well. But there are historical examples of democratic stability introduced into a new democracy by changes to the electoral system, such as Papua New Guinea’s change from an Alternative Vote (AV) to a plurality system (Reilly 2000). As with constitutional engineering more generally, there are reasons to be critical when evaluating new electoral systems for democratic regimes. As the Bolivian case shows, electoral reforms may produce unintended consequences: Whereas most social scientists expected MMP to reduce the number of parties, Bolivia’s effective number of parties increased in 1997 and 2002, accelerating a crisis of the political party system.

Like Participación Popular, the electoral system reforms specifically designed to improve the representative function of Bolivian political parties. Yet, as the evidence presented in the preceding chapters demonstrates, these reforms had the unintended consequence of polarizing the Bolivian electorate and “regionalizing” political parties—especially along already salient regional and cultural cleavages. Over time, these new “local” dimensions of politics exerted what Giovanni Sartori (1976) describes as a “centrifugal” force on the political system. Whereas the previous list-PR system encouraged moderated bargaining, the new MMP electoral system provided substantial incentives for local,

regionalist, and anti-systemic parties. One lesson from the Bolivian case is that institutional engineering solutions to social, political, and economic problems should be pursued with more caution.

### **Nation, State, and Democratic Authority**

But what of “state deficiencies”? There is considerable truth to Mainwaring’s claim that weak, ineffective, and unconsolidated states contributed to the various Andean crises. But this cannot adequately explain the Bolivian case—particularly regarding timing. While the Ecuadorian and Peruvian crises were visible since the early 1990s, Bolivia witnessed no such crisis during the whole decade—even though it faced larger socioeconomic obstacles. Further, there is substantial evidence that the Bolivian state was slowly becoming more (not less) efficient during the 1990s. Mainwaring’s operational measures for state deficiencies—corruption and transparency—do not easily apply to Bolivia. There was no major corruption scandal of the type that plagued the early years of the Paz Zamora presidency (1989-1993). If anything, reforms like *Participación Popular* not only increased transparency from pre-1994 levels, but also increased the reach of the state into previously remote corners of the national territory. Similarly, the introduction of a modified jury trial system, bilingual education, the recognition of indigenous community and the increased fiscal and institutional resources provided to local communities by *Participación Popular* improved the state’s reach across various levels of civil society. Evidence from the Bolivian case does not support the “state deficiencies” hypothesis.

Instead, the Bolivian case demonstrates the importance of examining the relationship between the concepts of nation, state, and democratic authority. Walker Connor’s (1978) exhortation to pay careful attention to this conceptual difference—and his emphasis that few

of the world's states are actually "nation-states" in any precise sense—is still relevant today. And though there has been a growing body of literature on democracy in "divided societies," these are not as integrated into the sociological and anthropological literature on nationalism in the way that this study encourages. Clearly, the modern Bolivian nationalism that emerged in the post-Chaco era focused extensively on constructing a modern, corporative, integrationist, and homogenizing nation-state. But the state that the 1952 National Revolution proclaimed also then reversed the process, encouraging a state-sponsored policy of nation-building, particularly through public education. Thus, both "nation" and "state" are agent and action, cause and effect. It is also important to remember that states are popularly legitimated not only by their bureaucratic efficiency (as the "state deficiencies" argument holds), but also by a popular consensus, agreement, or "imaginary" that considers the state a true representation of "the people"—whether we conceptualize it as the nation or the *demos*. After all, in a world dominated by the ideology of the nation-state, states seek to represent themselves—both externally and internally—as a "representation" of a national community (Kelly and Kaplan 2001).

Additionally, this interplay between state and nation demonstrates some of the issues raised by pluralist democratic theory, particular in two works by Robert Dahl: *After the Revolution? Authority in the Good Society* (1990) and *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control* (1982). In both of these works, Dahl struggles with the issue of state authority in a democratic polity. Because pluralism takes as a starting assumption the belief that polities are fragmented into numerous plural or factional groups, pluralist democratic theory does not easily fit into most conceptions of the nation-state. The shift by Bolivian elites in the 1980s-1990s away from a corporative conception of Bolivian society toward a pluralist one thus implicitly undermined the very national imaginary that underpinned the Bolivian nation-

state. While some groups embraced this new pluralism as a means to channel grievances against a historically centralist state, others rejected this new understanding in continued to embrace a corporatist nationalism. This shift made it difficult for the state to maintain effective control or exert authority.

Again, the stilt-walker analogy is useful. As Bolivia's democracy moved across a semantic field, shifts in that field (arguments about the scope and nature of the *demos*) were destabilizing. Unable to stand on firm foundations, Bolivia's "democracy on stilts" eventually stumbled. In part, the transition to pluralism made state authority more problematic. The earlier state-corporatist discourse acknowledged the state's role as a mediator of social disputes, even as it organized society into corporative elements. The new pluralist discourse, instead, elevated the state away from a direct mediating role and instead made the state an "arena" in which plural groups competed for political power. Inevitably, some plural groups (particularly wealthy minorities) were better positioned to take advantage of pluralist democracy. As such, many outside this emerging consensus—particularly as power shifted to the *media luna* and away from Andean regions of Bolivia—came to see the Bolivian state as little more than a representation of *some* plural interests, but not the whole "national" community.

In the face of internal contradictions, the Bolivia's liberal-pluralist democratic state saw its authority and legitimacy erode, until it failed on October 2003. The state's "official" pluralism encouraged groups to organize, criticize, and make demands on the government. But some of these groups, such as the Aymaran *kataristas* and lowland Nación Camba, went further: demanding various levels of political autonomy from the central state. The tensions between a democratic state trying to exercise central authority against plural ethno-regional groups that wanted to create autonomous political, cultural, and economic spheres put the

Bolivian state in a delicate balance. Consistent with the “crisis of legitimacy” theory, reforms such as Participación Popular, which devolved state authority to local communities, increased expectations. Similarly, by 2000 small, autonomous groups (neighborhood school parents’ committees, individual villages, independent market vendors’ associations, etc.) continuously brought their individual demands before the central state. Absent the previous corporative structures for channeling demands, the central state was forced to attend to a growing number of specific demands. Again consistent with the “crisis of legitimacy” theory, social expectations and the number of demands only increased each time the state negotiated a compromise with any specific group. In time, the government’s willingness to *dialogar* (“dialogue” or “negotiate”) with specific groups overloaded the state’s capacity, further eroding the state’s authority.

In short, the story of the Bolivian case is not of an elitist democracy that blindly followed a neoliberal “Washington Consensus” and paid little attention to the needs of its citizens. Instead, the Bolivian case highlights the difficulty that new democracies face when trying to simultaneously introduce democratic reforms meant to improve or “deepen” democracy in the country while also retaining the necessary state authority that makes democracy possible in the first place (Linz and Stepan 1996). In particular, the Bolivian case illustrates the importance of maintaining a widely shared common “imaginary” that defines the scope and nature of the political community: the *demos*. Thus, the Bolivian case puts at the forefront questions of how state and nation are interrelated and how democratization—a process that not only liberalizes the state but also opens the *demos* question—can affect the underlying consensus upon which all democratic states rely.



### **Building a New Social Contract?**

The 1990s were a period of incredible optimism and hope for observers of Bolivia's democratization process. Unlike its Andean neighbors, Bolivia's state and its political elites were actively engaged with innovative reforms meant, in large measure, to improve the quality of democracy and increase political participation and representation. Yet within only a few years, the country shifted from political stability to political crisis in a dramatic fashion. Since October 2003, the country has been deeply polarized and in danger of sliding into further crisis, a reactionary coup, or even civil war. In the midst of these possibilities, Bolivians are currently engaged in yet another round of "constitutional engineering" after the July 2006 constituent assembly elections. The popularly elected Constituent Assembly delegates, who have been meeting regularly since August 2006, have an opportunity to produce a new Bolivian constitution—a new "social contract"—that may serve to stabilize a new Bolivian democratic polity. Yet the Assembly itself has also become a focus on polarized debate. And since the historical experience of Bolivian (and Latin American) constituent assemblies has not, on the whole, been positive, there is also reason for concern.

The concept of the "social contract" has salience beyond philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In part, the current Bolivian crisis is a struggle between liberal (or "Lockean") and corporative (or "Rousseauian") visions of such a contract. Not surprisingly, Bolivian intellectual elites have recently adopted the term (along with similar expressions) when considering both the current Bolivian crisis ("the social contract is broken") and the necessary solution ("to build a new social contract"). An alternative conceptualization is "social consensus": just as Bolivia's democracy rested upon an elite consensus, Bolivia's democratic future now seems to rest on establishing a broader social consensus that can simultaneously legitimate the state, craft channels of representation, and

provide an arena for civic engagement and disagreement. In many ways, the reconstruction of a new, collectively shared “democratic imaginary” will also require some form of social “consensus” or “contract” that can bind the various ethnic, cultural, regional, sectoral, and other differences between Bolivian civil society. Thus, the task of the Constituent Assembly is more than to just draft a new political constitution: it must provide the foundation for a new collective imaginary that—while recognizing differences between the plural members of the “Bolivian” community—binds that community together. As with national imaginaries, the Bolivian case demonstrates how fragile is a social contract, and how democratization can frequently call into question the fundamental assumptions of such a contract.

Bolivia is currently at a crossroads. Its previous democratic stability has shown itself to have been precarious, like a stilt-walker attempting to stay aloft over shifting terrain. Contrary to the predictions of Di Palma (1990) or Przeworski (1988), an elite consensus based on liberal-pluralist values was not enough to sustain Bolivia’s democracy. Ironically, efforts by that same elite to improve the reach and scope of liberal-pluralist democracy did not help to strengthen the democratic polity, but rather contributed to a deligitimation of the democratic state. The current dilemma, therefore, is whether this fragmented and polarized social fabric can be mended by a new social consensus, a new democratic (and pluralist) imaginary, that enjoys a wider foundation.

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