

## BOLIVIA'S PARTY SYSTEM AFTER OCTOBER 2003

### WHERE DID ALL THE POLITICIANS GO?

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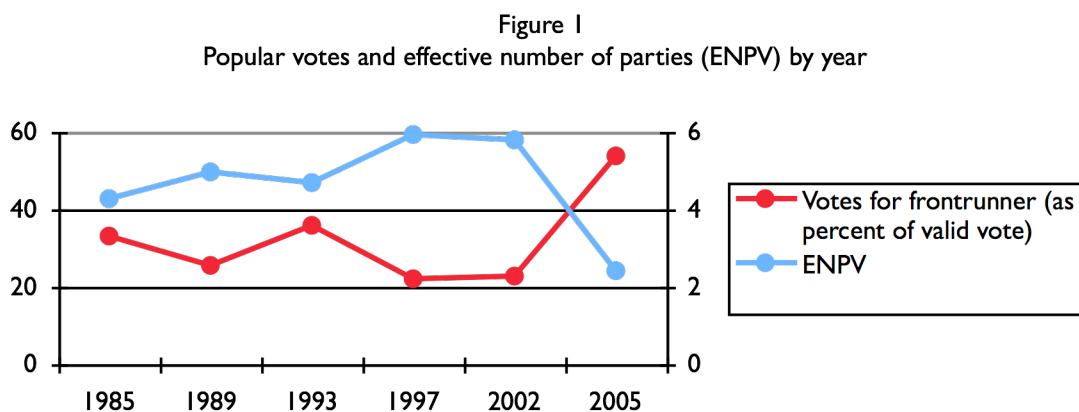
#### ABSTRACT

Bolivia's political system has recently undergone a dramatic transformation after nearly two decades dominated by three "systemic" parties (MNR, ADN, MIR). Despite resisting challenges from "outsiders" (whether populists, leftists, or indigenous movements) for nearly two decades, the party system was quickly swept away after the "gas war" of October 2003. In its place, the new political landscape appears polarized into two distinct camps: Evo Morales's MAS and an opposition led by PODEMOS. This paper offers a preliminary exploratory look at Bolivia's most recent political transformation, looking particularly at the migration patterns of Bolivian career politicians between the 2002 and 2005 general elections.

## Bolivia's Party System after October 2003

In December 2005, Evo Morales surprised most observers by winning Bolivia's sixth presidential election. By the time the campaign drew to a close, few were surprised that Evo was the frontrunner. But his victory by a majority of the popular vote (rather than by the traditional second round legislative election) exceeded most pundits' expectations.<sup>1</sup> In a country with a splintered political landscape, a presidential candidate had surpassed a third of the vote popular vote only once (when Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada won the presidency in 1993). Yet with 53.74 percent of the popular vote, Morales had scored a resounding victory over his opponent, Jorge Quiroga. Still, despite losing to Morales by the widest margin of any election since the country's transition to democracy in 1982, Quiroga's second place finish (with 28.58 percent of the vote) meant that he too had won more votes than the frontrunners in three previous democratic contests (1989, 1997, and 2002).

The result is striking if we look at two trends (see Figure 1): Since 1985, votes for presidential frontrunners had (with the exception of 1993) tended to decline. In 1997 and 2002, the frontrunner in each election had won only 22.26 and 22.46 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, the effective number of parties had increased. The 1997 and 2002 electoral contests each saw 6.0 and 5.9 effective number of parties. In sharp contrast, the 2005 election produced a virtual two-party contest, with only 2.4 effective parties as together Morales and Quiroga took more than 80 percent of the vote.



Based on CNE data. ENPV calculated based on presidential (or *plurinominal*) votes using the formula developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979).

Such a shift reflects a high degree of political polarization. After the 2005 election, political conflict in Bolivia appears to be neatly divided between two relatively new

<sup>1</sup> A final Ipsos Captura poll conducted the week before the election gave Morales an edge over Quiroga (34.2 and 29.2 percent, respectively). The poll suggested that Morales would edge out Quiroga, but that Quiroga's PODEMOS would win enough legislative seats to secure his congressional election. See "Evo ganaría en las urnas y Tuto en los curules" *Bolivia.com* (December 14, 2005) <http://www.bolivia.com/noticias/autonoticias/DetalleNoticia30375.asp>

parties: Morales's Movement Toward Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo [MAS]) and Quiroga's Democratic Social Power (Poder Democrático y Social [PODEMOS]). Despite using a proportional electoral system, the two parties combined control 93 percent of the Senate and 88 percent of the House of Deputies. This outcome suggests three distinct, but interrelated, explanations:

- The political party system in place since the country's transition to democracy in 1982 has (essentially) collapsed.
- MAS is now the dominant anti-system party and represents a broad, popular constituency that opposes the neoliberal policies of previous governments.
- PODEMOS is now the standard-bearer for the "traditional right" in Bolivia (that is, it represents those who defend the neoliberal status quo).

This paper offers a preliminary evaluation of such claims by focusing on a particular set of political actors: professional (or "career") politicians. Each of the explanatory claims above should produce some observable implications for such actors. By focusing on the career paths of Bolivia's politicians, we may better understand what kind of political transformation is going on in contemporary Bolivia and begin to find answers to a number of questions: Is it truly an electoral revolution? Does the 2005 electoral victory for MAS represent the triumph of a decades-long political struggle? Has the neoliberal right merely reorganized itself? Is today's regionalism merely a disguise for neoliberal restorationists? And, of course, what has happened to Bolivia's "political class" since October 2003?

### **Political Parties, Elections, and Politicians**

There is a growing body of literature on elections and party systems in new democracies. The literature on electoral systems is, of course, well known (e.g. Lijphart 1994; Cox 1997; Shugart and Wattenberg 2001; Norris 2004). Following the seminal works of Maurice Duverger (1962) and Giovanni Sartori (1976), scholars have long recognized the important role that political parties play in liberal democracy. A few years ago, S. M. Lipset (2000) declared the "indispensability" of political parties. There have also been a number of "handbooks" of political parties and party systems, including those that cover Latin America (e.g. Di Tella 2005; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; McDonald and Ruhl 1989). There has also been considerable recent attention to particular types of parties, most notably ethnic parties (e.g. Van Cott 2005; Madrid 2005; Chandra 2004). What this literature has in common is a perspective that puts the fates of political parties at the epicenter of electoral democracy.

Conventional wisdom has thus long suggested that the quality of a democracy goes hand in hand with the health of its party system. Under this perspective, electoral democracy is best served by institutionalized parties, firmly rooted in civil society, and engaged in limited competition at the margins. Competition is "limited" because—in

elections with low electoral volatility—neither victories nor defeats are total. Not surprisingly, Pederson’s (1983) volatility index is a standard measure for the health of a democratic system. Competition is thus “marginal” because core constituencies are also consolidated; electoral turnovers are the product of small numbers of “swing” voters (not sudden large-scale shifts). In consolidated democracies, according to this model, parties may lose elections but the party system remains stable.

According to this view, unstable (or unconsolidated) party systems pose threats to the consolidation of democracy. In places like Latin America, where party systems are often much more fluid and “inchoate” (Mainwaring 1998) than in the established European or Anglo-American democracies, this is seen as a problem. Kay Lawson and Peter Merkl (1988) worried about the fate of democracy “when parties fail” (even when they “fail” in advanced industrial democracies). Similarly, many have tied the collapse of liberal democracy and the rise of semi-authoritarian regimes in places like Venezuela and Peru to the collapse of party systems (e.g. Levitsky 1999; Dietz and Myers 2007; Morgan 2007). The most stable democracies in the region are those in which electoral volatility remains low and competition is limited to a small number of institutionalized parties or coalitions (e.g. Chile and Costa Rica). Yet several authors in the Lawson and Merkl (1988) volume also suggest that the “emerging alternative organizations” may also revitalize democracies or help transform authoritarian and semi-authoritarian systems into democracies.

Such “electoral revolutions” have occurred in Latin American democracies. Two examples stand out: The 2000 Mexican election saw the collapse of a dominant-party system as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional [PRI]) handed power for the first time to an opposition party. The “collapse” of Mexico’s dominant-party system served as Mexico’s transition from semi-authoritarian regime to multiparty electoral democracy. The 2004 Uruguayan election saw an “outsider” party, the social-democratic Frente Amplio, break the traditional Colorado-National two-party system. Yet despite a superficial similarity between the “collapse” of the two-party system in Uruguay and in Venezuela, the Frente Amplio’s victory has hardly led to a democratic crisis in the Southern Cone’s smallest country.

But do changes in party system dynamics really “matter” for political realities on the ground? Both Mexico and Uruguay are cases in which institutionalized “outsider” parties challenged institutionalized “insider” parties. In Mexico, PRI dominance appears to have given way to a three-party system involving the conservative National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional [PAN]) and the social-democratic Party of Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática [PRD]). Both parties have long histories going back to the 1940s (PAN) and 1990s (PRD). Similarly, Uruguay’s Frente Amplio dates back to the 1970s, while the National and Colorado parties date back to the 19th century. In countries where party systems are highly fluid, such changes may matter less, particularly if politicians are merely switching party labels (as is routine in Brazil and Ecuador). What then?

This paper expands on the literature on “electoral revolutions” by offering some insights into the election of Evo Morales. Viewed as part of the region-wide “shift to the

left” (Castañeda 2006), Morales’s election has been frequently compared to the 2002 election of Luiz Inácio da Silva (“Lula”) in Brazil. Both come from humble backgrounds and led leftist anti-neoliberal parties as “outsider” candidates. Despite the significant differences in their governing styles, both presidents may have similarly transformed their countries’ party systems.

The literature on parties and elections in Latin America has paid some attention to the internal dynamics of political parties and their roles within party systems. A recent follow-up volume by Lawson and Merkl (2007) includes chapters on Mexico and Uruguay (as well as one on Chile). Here, the various authors look to understand how parties “prosper” (rather than “fail”), as well as how “success” can mean different things to different parties. In Mexico, Mark Martinez (2007) suggests that problems within the PRI provided an “opening” for PAN. In contrast, Jorge Lanzaro (2007) argues that it was an internal reorganization and reorientation of the Frente Amplio that enabled it to successfully challenge the dominant parties. Similarly, others have looked at the transformations of the Workers’ Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT]) in Brazil (Hunter 2007) and Argentina’s Peronist Justicialista Party (Levitsky 2003).

Missing in much of this literature, however, are studies of how politicians themselves maneuver within a shifting party system. One notable exception has been Timothy Power’s (2000) analysis of the political right in post-authoritarian Brazil. While others have noted the practice of party switching (e.g. Desposato 2006; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 1997), Power looked specifically at individual career politicians and traced their political careers across the 1980s and ’90s. Rather than looking at party switching as a sign of political instability, Power saw it as a way for members of the “political right”—defined as those who had been members of the National Renovating Alliance (Aliança Renovadora Nacional [ARENA]) or the Democratic Social Party (Partido Democrático Social [PDS])—to continue their political careers after the country’s transition to democracy. Power also presents Brazil as a “paradigmatic case of a conservative transition from authoritarianism” (2000, 4) in which authoritarian politicians continue to play an important role after the transition to democracy, even if under a new guise.

This paper borrows from Power, and considers the 2005 Bolivian election as a “within-system” transition (that is, a transition within the parameters of electoral democracy, rather than towards or away from democracy). Though the type of transition is different, the key question is the same: Did the previous regime’s politicians survive into the new one? The answer to this question may shed light on the nature and scope of Morales’s 2005 electoral victory, and whether the new MAS-PODEMOS bipolarity is a continuation of previous political antagonisms, or something else.

### **The Bolivian Case: A Brief Overview**

Clearly, the September-October 2003 “Gas War” was a critical moment in Bolivian politics. The wave of street protests that drove Sánchez de Lozada from the presidency

left at least 59 dead<sup>2</sup> and shook the traditional political establishment. Since then, a form of normalized instability—which Bolivians refer to as “la crisis”—has marked the country’s political life. In the 26 months between Sánchez de Lozada’s resignation and Morales’s election, Bolivia was governed by two interim presidents, held nation-wide municipal elections (on schedule) and a popular referendum (a radical departure) on hydrocarbon policy, and saw major revisions to the constitution. Both the constitutional revisions and a dramatic overhaul of electoral laws changed the political “rules of the game” upon which future elections—and political careers—would depend. Throughout it all, the same legislature that had been elected in 2002 continued to function until a new one was installed in January 2006. These legislators played a critical role in redesigning Bolivia’s post-2003 political landscape.

As such, one would expect incumbent politicians would seek to ensure their continued political careers. Nevertheless, there was intense social pressure for politicians to reform the political system to make it more open. The Bolivian Congress responded with a series of constitutional reforms (known as the “2004 Constitution”) that introduced the possibility of constituent assemblies, referendums, and citizen initiatives. It also removed wording that explicitly stated that Bolivians were represented through “political parties” (the new wording now includes “citizens’ groups” and “indigenous communities”). Beyond the surface, however, it is unclear how such wording changes actually affected political realities. While the introduction of “direct” forms of democratic participation (referendum and citizen initiatives) were radical departures, it remains unclear how “citizens’ groups” and “indigenous communities” are different from political parties.

The nation-wide December 2004 municipal elections were an interesting test, both for traditional political parties and the new reforms. In most ways the various citizens’ and indigenous organizations that participated in the 327 electoral contests behaved and acted like political parties: They registered with the electoral courts, nominated a slate of candidates for the contests, and campaigned much like “typical” political parties. The only difference, of course, was that many of these organizations were purely local organizations. In previous contests, only nationally recognized parties could field candidates. National parties thus “recruited” local candidates who carried their banner. The result was that 2004 saw more than three hundred citizens’ organizations and more than fifty indigenous groups appeared in the contests, in addition to the 19 political parties or coalitions.<sup>3</sup> As expected, the election saw an increase in participation and resulted in low vote shares for political parties, including MAS, relative to the 1999 municipal elections (see Romero Ballivián 2005). Yet the biggest winners in the contests remained either traditional parties or, most often, “new” (often regional) parties formed around a nucleus of politicians from the major parties. Three prime examples were Plan

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<sup>2</sup> This is the figure used by Bolivia’s Permanent Assembly on Human Rights (Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos [APDH]), an independent human rights organization. Amnesty International’s investigative report lists 68 dead, based on media reports.

<sup>3</sup> MNR and MIR campaigned together in San Ignacio, Beni. UCS and MBL campaigned together in Trinidad, Beni.

Progreso (PP) and National Unity (Frente de Unidad Nacional [UN]), both founded by former members of the Revolutionary Left Movement (Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria [MIR]), as well as 21st Century Alliance (Alianza Siglo XXI [ASXXI]). In highly fragmented local contest, political parties were able to win a number of important contests, particularly across major cities. The result further destabilized and fractured the political system at the national level.

The major test was the December 2005 general election. Because the presidential and legislative elections are linked through a mixed-member proportional system, the number of participants was significantly reduced to “political organizations” with national representation.<sup>4</sup> Of the eight political organizations that presented candidate slates, only three were expected to do well: MAS, PODEMOS, and UN (whose candidate, Samuel Doria Medina, was in the early weeks of the year a favorite to win the presidency). Even at the department level, the new political organizations highly coordinated their activities at the national level. MAS presented a united front across the country, presenting prefectural candidates in all nine departments. PODEMOS did likewise, though it allowed a number of its prefectural candidates to run under their own banner.<sup>5</sup> In many departments, UN or MNR allied with PODEMOS.

None of the parties that had dominated Bolivian politics for the two decades of democracy did well in the 2005 election. Only the historic National Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario [MNR]) even presented a candidate list—and placed a distant fourth (just behind UN) with 6.46 percent of the popular vote. Of the eight parties represented in the 2002-2005 legislature, only two (MAS and MNR) won seats in 2005. Two parties were conspicuous in their absence: The radical-indigenous Pachacuti Indigenous Movement (Movimiento Indígena Pachacuti [MIP]), with six deputies, had been the fifth largest legislative contingent in 2002—an electoral triumph for the *katarista* movement. The populist New Republican Force (Nueva Fuerza Republicana [NFR]) had made its national debut in 2002 espousing an anti-system rhetoric and placing a close third in the 2002 contest. While the anti-system credentials of NFR were questionable (it had participated in the 1997-2002 ADN-led government and was headed by the neo-populist mayor of Cochabamba, Manfred Reyes Villa), MIP represented the radical elements of a well-established indigenous political movement dating back to the 1970s. In their place, the legislature elected in 2005 included two newcomer parties: PODEMOS and UN.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bolivia’s National Electoral Court considers all registered and recognized political parties, citizens’ groups, and indigenous communities as “political organizations” and uses the same administrative guidelines in treating them.

<sup>5</sup> These included the candidates in Cochabamba, where NFR’s Manfred Reyes Villa ran with Cochabamba Unity Alliance (Alianza Unidad Cochabamba, [AUN]); in Tarija, where MIR’s Jaime Paz Zamora ran with Regional Convergence (Convergencia Regional [CR]); and in Santa Cruz, where Ruben Costas ran with Autonomy for Bolivia (Autonomía para Bolivia [APB]).

<sup>6</sup> Technically, PODEMOS is not a recognized political party. Though it campaigned in 2005 as “PODEMOS,” it is registered with CNE as ASXXI.

Not only did most of the established parties disappear, the shift away from the status quo was monumental. Table 1 shows how dramatic this change was between the 2002 and 2005 general elections. MAS nearly tripled its representation, winning far more seats than one would expect from a simple “grand alliance” of leftist, populist, and indigenous political organizations. The combined seats for PODEMOS, UN, and MNR (73) still amounted to significantly fewer than what all the “establishment” parties (if we include UCS and NFR) had won in the previous election (116). By itself, PODEMOS—often seen as the standard bearer for the status quo—had barely managed eight more seats than Sánchez de Lozada’s MNR three years earlier. Clearly, 2005 represented not only a partisan dealignment, but also a dramatic realignment of the electorate towards an openly anti-system political alternative.

Table 1  
Total legislative representation in Bolivia, by party (1985 to 2005)

<b>Party</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2005</b>
ADN	5	–
MAS	35	84
MIP	6	–
MIR	31	–
MNR	48	8
NFR	27	–
PODEMOS	–	56
UCS	5	–
UN	–	9
Total seats	157	157

Based on CNE data.

Bolivian politicians clearly anticipated such an outcome. Several presidential hopefuls began organizing new political vehicles soon after the dust settled in late October 2003. As early as December of that year, Bolivian pundits began speculating about three presidential hopefuls: Jorge Quiroga, Samuel Doria Medina, and Juan Carlos Durán. Quiroga had served as vice president under Hugo Banzer from 1997 to 2001, before assuming the presidency in 2001 when Banzer resigned due to poor health, had been a longtime member of Democratic National Action (Acción Democrática Nacional [ADN]). Quiroga had been the presumptive presidential nominee for ADN, until he assumed the presidency in 2001 (Bolivian law prevents a sitting president for running for reelection). Doria Medina likewise had a long trajectory within MIR, starting as planning minister in 1989. Durán had been the MNR’s presidential candidate in 1997 and had placed second, behind Banzer. As a powerful figure within the MNR, he was discussed as a possible candidate. While Durán disappeared from the political scene after a bitter fight for control of the MNR (which eventually nominated a relatively unknown Michiaki Nagatani as its 2005 presidential candidate), both Quiroga and Doria Medina ditched their respective parties. Both founded new electoral vehicles that promised a vague

reformist platform. In the 2005 presidential campaign, none of the candidate defended the status quo or the Sánchez de Lozada government.

But did rank and file party members follow these candidates? The top three presidential candidates in 2005 were all well known political figures: Quiroga, Doria Medina, and Evo Morales. Of the three, only Morales campaigned under his previous banner (MAS). He was joined by a fourth figure: Felipe Quispe, who also retained his previous political association (MIP). The MNR's choice of an unknown presidential candidate, Michiaki Nagatani (whose only previous political experience was a failed effort in the 2004 city of Santa Cruz municipal election), suggested that Sánchez de Lozada's party was shedding its political baggage and hoping to craft a new political image. Further, in the intensely polarized political climate, it was likely that career politicians would seek cover within another political vehicle. This paper, therefore, seeks to understand what role, if any, pre-2005 politicians played in Bolivian electoral politics. Even if the party system collapsed, one would expect that career politicians would seek to secure their political futures. In short: Where did all the politicians go?

### **The Role of Institutional Design**

Understanding the dynamics of the 2005 election requires an understanding of Bolivian political institutions. Here, two features stand out: the electoral system and the country's unique system of "parliamentarized" presidentialism.

***Electoral System.*** Elections in Bolivia are conducted under a fused presidential-legislative electoral system. This means that political parties must present a single slate of candidates for president and all legislative seats; terms for all offices are congruent.

For the lower chamber House of Deputies, elections are conducted under a mixed-member proportional system. Approximately half the 130 seats are won through a system of proportional representation—based on the votes won by the "plurinominal" list headed by each party's presidential candidate—with each of the country's nine departments serving as an at-large electoral district; the number of seats varies by departments. The other half are elected by simple plurality in "uninominal" single-member districts; such districts are roughly proportional in size within departments (though more populous departments are still over-represented).

Each department has three senate seats (for a total of 27) and each party puts forward two senate candidates in each department. The party whose plurinominal list wins the most votes in each department seats both of its senate candidates; the party that places second wins the remaining third seat (which is awarded to the first name on its senate candidate list).

Prior to the change in the electoral law in 1995, Bolivian elections were conducted under purely list-proportional systems, with all deputy seats awarded based on a single

candidate list. In 2005, the number of uninominal seats was increased from 68 to 70, as a compromise over an apportionment dispute.<sup>7</sup>

***Parliamentarized Presidentialism.*** Prior to 2005, no Bolivian presidential candidate (or “plurinominal” list) had won a simple majority of the valid popular vote.<sup>8</sup> The matter was resolved by Article 90 of the constitution, which stipulated that Congress was empowered to select a president from among the top frontrunners (prior to 1995, from the top three; after 1995, from the top two). This became the foundation for what has been described as a “parliamentarized presidential” system (Mayorga 1997; Centellas 2001).

From 1985 through 2002 (as noted in Figure 1) the share of votes for the frontrunner had tended to decline. Voters, pundits, and politicians alike had started to expect that elections themselves would not determine presidential winners, but rather that post-electoral coalitions would. Legislative coalitions provided incoming presidents with powerful legislative majorities. These coalitions were also sometimes unexpected (as was the 1989 MIR-ADN coalition) and very likely to place second-place (or even third-place) presidential contenders in the presidential chair.<sup>9</sup>

As the December 2005 election neared, there was widespread speculation that Morales could win a wide plurality, but not win enough votes to be elected presidency outright. Thus, it was possible that even placing second, Quiroga could win the presidency if he was able to put together a legislative majority in the congressional second round.

## Hypotheses

This paper begins with the premise that Bolivian elected representatives are “career” politicians. Regardless of whether such politicians remain consistently loyal to a single party banner, or migrate to others when convenient, one should expect a significant degree of continuity of personnel between elections. This premise, however, needs to be tested. Thus, my first research hypothesis is:

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<sup>7</sup> Because of demographic shifts, as Bolivia’s eastern regions have gained in population, there was intense regionalist pressure to decrease the number of deputy seats in highland departments to favor eastern ones. In the end, a presidential decree (*D.S.28428*) gave Santa Cruz three additional seats and Cochabamba one additional seat; La Paz lost two seats, while Oruro and Potosí each lost one seat.

<sup>8</sup> Bolivia’s electoral court calculates vote percentages by using the “valid” votes cast (that is, excluding all blank, spoiled, or null ballots).

<sup>9</sup> In 1985, a legislative coalition of left and center-left parties elected second-place Víctor Paz Estenssoro (MNR) over first-place Hugo Banzer (ADN). Shortly after, however, Paz Estenssoro and Banzer signed a legislative accord. In 1989, a deadlock between the two frontrunners (Sánchez de Lozada and Banzer) led to the election of third-place Jaime Paz Estenssoro (MIR).

*Hypothesis 1.* A significant share of the legislators elected in any election is comprised either by incumbents or known political figures (e.g. cabinet members in previous administrations).

In this paper, I am less concerned with party loyalty per se (though this can also be tested and is the subject of a larger research agenda). But if we merely assume that parties wish to “win” elections, they will put forward “known quantities” before the electorate. Parties will then seek to balance their need for candidates who can deliver votes with candidates they can trust to toe the party leadership’s line once in office.

The election results—particularly the emergence of a virtual two-party system—suggests some additional hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 2.* Politicians opposed to the pre-2005 status quo migrated to MAS, which had become the standard bearer for that position.

*Hypothesis 3.* Politicians with careers in parties associated with the status quo (ADN, MIR, MNR NFR, and UCS) migrated to new political organizations associated with former “establishment” leaders (PODEMOS and UN).

What I expect to see here is a pattern of dispersion. Despite the high degree of uncertainty in a transitional election such as the 2005 Bolivian election—and a reputation in Bolivian politics for personalism, clientelism, and opportunism—I expect that few (if any) “establishment” figures would switch their allegiance to MAS. And even if they did, I highly doubt that MAS would accept them into the fold.

Finally, with regard to MAS—the only party to prosper between the 2002 and 2005 general elections—I expect that implications of the first and second hypotheses to produce significant continuity within MAS. That is, one would expect that MAS legislators elected in 2002 would seek to retain their seats and that the party leadership would retain them (as “known quantities”). This is outlined in the final hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 4.* A significant number of MAS incumbents would win seats in 2005.

## **Data and Methods**

Throughout this paper, I rely on data provided by Bolivia’s National Electoral Court (Corte Nacional Electoral [CNE]). This includes the names of candidates and seat winners, when available. Because this paper explores party personnel continuity over time, data includes candidate information from general elections, municipal elections, and prefectural elections. Much of the data was collected during research trips in the country, especially during a Fulbright Fellowship from September 2003 to July 2004. Data for the 2004 municipal and 2005 general election were made available during a brief research trip in the summer of 2007.

I should note that this is only preliminary data for a larger, more ambitious project to study party personnel in a number of countries, including Bolivia. That project, funded by

a National Science Foundation grant, is headed by Matthew Shugart, Ellis Krauss, and Robert Pekkanen.

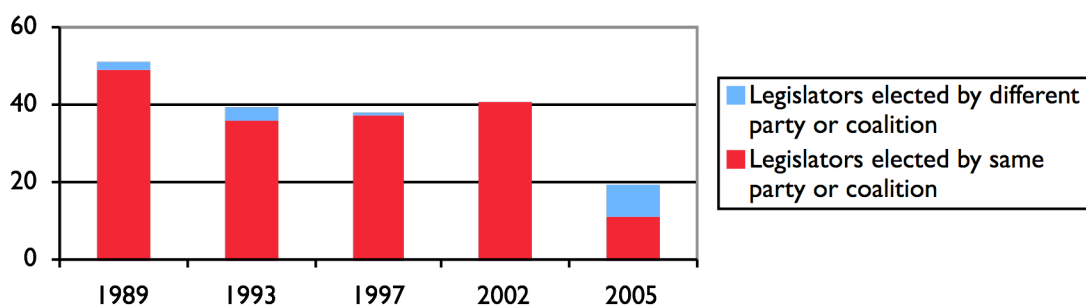
In this paper, the focus is on elected representatives, not on entire candidate lists. This was primarily a factor of time constraints and data availability (full, accurate candidate lists for 1985, 1989, and 1993 are not readily available). For each election, a list of elected legislators was cross-referenced with all previous legislative lists (not just the most immediately previous one) to check to see whether individuals reappeared. Each such occurrence was noted, with information on the party identification of each instance recorded.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, each individual was cross-referenced with municipal candidate lists, as well as list of former cabinet members available in Mesa (2006).

Finally, this paper also relies on qualitative information about “important” political figures and candidates. Such assessments—based on research experience studying Bolivian electoral politics—help flesh out the quantitative data.

## Analysis and Discussion

When looking at continuity in legislative personnel across elections, we see an intriguing trend (see Figure 2). The 1989 election saw the largest number of incumbent politicians, with 51 incumbents returning from the 1985 legislature (the equivalent of one third of the legislature). That number decreased in the 1993 election, then remained steady at about forty (about a quarter of the legislature), until 2002. What is surprising about the figures from 1989 through 2002 is that the vast majority of returning legislators returned under the same party banner as they had in the past. There was little evidence of party switching prior to 2005. Despite its reputation as an “inchoate” party system, Bolivia’s political parties seemed to retain a substantial degree of internal cohesion.

Figure 2  
No. of legislators with previous legislative, municipal, or cabinet-level experience



Based on CNE data. Legislators elected from parties that form an alliance with and/or are absorbed into another party are considered reelected by the same party. Total legislative seats available: 157.

<sup>10</sup> I wish to thank Juliana Horwath, my 2007-2008 Dana Research Assistant at Dickinson College, for her assistance with this portion of the project.

A return rate of about 25% may not seem like much. But in electoral systems based on proportionality, reelection is often more difficult to guarantee than it is in plurality electoral systems. This is particularly true in countries with a relatively large, but balanced, number of parties. A small change in voter preferences can mean that parties lose seats relative to their previous election (and, thus, incumbents). In countries with levels of electoral volatility, like Bolivia, one might expect even fewer returning incumbents.<sup>11</sup> One expects parties and politicians to compensate for this by placing high profile candidates in “safe” positions on electoral lists. But this is also never a guarantee. Additionally, a number of incumbents may not run for reelection for a number of reasons (ranging frequently from death, retirement from politics, or overseas diplomatic appointments). Often, high profile candidates who did not win seats in elections are (if their party is able to secure a place in the governing coalition) rewarded with cabinet appointments.

What is significant is that the return of incumbents is significantly lower than in previous elections. Only 19 legislators had previous careers in party politics. This suggests that relatively few career politicians survived—at least with legislative careers—the dealignment of the party system.

But did the fallout of the post-2003 political crisis affect all parties equally? Of those that returned in 2005, only 11 returned under their previous party banner. This number seems remarkably low, considering that MAS had 35 incumbent legislators (elected in 2002) available for reelection. Additionally, the rising anti-system party ran candidates in all 327 of the country’s municipal contests, expanding its electoral reach beyond its former strongholds. Surely a number of “known quantities” emerged within MAS that were available for the 2005 general election. Yet a look at the 2005 legislature tells a more complicated story.

As the clear winner, MAS returned a large share of incumbents. But it only returned seven incumbents (out of 84 total seats), which was only a third of all returned incumbents. PODEMOS returned as many former establishment figures, five of which had held seats in the 2002 legislature. Arguably, the party that fared best in terms of reelecting incumbents was the MNR. Of the party’s meager eight elected legislators, half had been elected in 2002.<sup>12</sup> Another (Gustavo Ugarte Ruiz) had been the party’s second senate candidate for Tarija in 2002. Another successful party was ADN. In 2002, the party had seated only five of its candidates (one senator and four deputies); in 2005 five ADN figures won legislative seats (all of them in the Senate). None of the nine UN legislators had previous political experience. Table 2 shows a list of the returned incumbents.

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of electoral volatility in Latin America, though not focusing on incumbent reelection, see Roberts and Wibbels (1999).

<sup>12</sup> I consider the MNR more “successful” than other establishment parties in large measure because (in addition to the above observation) it had the largest obstacle to overcome (it was the party of Sánchez de Lozada) and it was the only party to campaign under its own banner.

Table 2  
Legislators elected in 2005 with previous electoral experience

<b>Party</b>	<b>Most Recent Previous Position</b>
<b>MAS</b>	
<i>Ricardo Alberto Diaz</i>	Plurinominal deputy, Chuquisaca, 2002
<i>Antonio Peredo Leigue</i>	Plurinominal deputy, La Paz, 2002
<i>Santos Ramirez Valverde</i>	Plurinominal deputy, Potosí, 2002
<i>Felix Garcia Soruco</i>	Uninominal deputy, La Paz, 2002
<i>Gustavo Torrico Landa</i>	Plurinominal deputy, La Paz, 2002
<i>Jorge Ledezma Cornejo</i>	Uninominal deputy, Cochabamba, 2002
<i>Edmundo Novillo Aguilar</i>	Uninominal deputy, Cochabamba, 2002
<b>PODEMOS</b>	
<i>Maximo Fernando Rodriguez</i>	Plurinominal deputy, Chuquisaca, 2002 (ADN)
<i>Paulo Jorge Bravo Alencar</i>	Uninominal deputy, Pando, 2002 (ADN)
<i>Tito Hoz de Villa</i>	Uninominal deputy, Cochabamba, 1997 (ADN)
<i>Carlos Rauhl Böhr</i>	Uninominal deputy, Oruro, 1997 (ADN)
<i>Walter Guiteras</i>	Senator, Beni, 1997 (ADN)
<i>Claudia Bertha Paredes</i>	Uninominal deputy, La Paz, 2002 (MIR)
<i>Rodrigo Paz Pereira</i>	Uninominal deputy, Tarija, 2002 (MIR)
<i>Wilman Ramon Cardozo</i>	Uninominal deputy, Tarija, 2002 (MIR)
<b>MNR</b>	
<i>Miguel Majluf</i>	Senate, Beni, 2002
<i>Mario Diego Justiniano</i>	Senate, Santa Cruz, 2002
<i>Roxana Sandoval</i>	Uninominal deputy, Santa Cruz, 2002
<i>Carlos Alberto Sonneschein</i>	Uninominal deputy, Beni, 2002

Based on CNE data. Senators elected in 2005 in italics.

A quick overview of reelected politicians does suggest that PODEMOS drew political figures from across the “establishment” (with the important exception of MNR). A number of high profile ADN, MIR, NFR, and UCS figures either joined the PODEMOS campaign as candidates or endorsed the party publicly. Considerably fewer did so for UN. Additionally, at least 22 PODEMOS legislative candidates are known to have appeared in previous candidate lists for one of those parties, including five former MNR candidates (thought these were not elected). These were split almost evenly between uninominal Deputy and Senate seats. The uninominal candidacies are the most important, of course, since here known figures from establishment parties could campaign directly for votes in “friendly” constituencies. Overall, however, the strategy seems to have been successful. PODEMOS, MNR, and UN together won 20 (of 26) uninominal seats in the “Media Luna” departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, and Tarija.<sup>13</sup> These were regions where ADN, MNR, and MIR had consistently done well.

But the disproportional return of incumbents between MAS and PODEMOS is intriguing. Despite winning a considerably larger number of seats than PODEMOS, MAS returned one fewer incumbent. Moreover, fewer “senior” MAS figures returned from

<sup>13</sup> This region of Bolivia is popularly referred to as the “Media Luna” (“half moon”) because it forms a rough crescent. This region is also “lowlands” (as opposed to “Andean”) Bolivia, and is a bastion of anti-Morales opposition.

2002. None of the party's eight senators returned as MAS candidates in 2005. This included Filemón Escobar, the old veteran of the syndicalist Workers' Revolutionary Party (Partido Obrero Revolucionario [POR]), who had joined Evo Morales in 2002. For a time, Escobar had been Morales's right hand man, and the leader of the party's congressional delegation (even though Morales was himself a uninominal deputy). Additionally, the MAS 2005 candidate list included no known former candidates or previous winners from other leftist or indigenous parties. This includes figures from the United Left (Izquierda Unida [IU]) coalition under which Morales had won his first election in 1997 (when he was elected a uninominal deputy from Cochabamba). None of the well-known figures from the Gas War (Quispe, De la Cruz, Solares) are found on that list. The consequences of this are interesting.

Despite winning a comfortable majority of the popular vote, Morales's MAS did not secure a majority in the powerful Senate. Of the 27 seats, MAS secured only 12. Though it did not secure a majority either, PODEMOS won 13 seats (the MNR and UN each won a single senate seat). Of these 27 seats, only two were former senators: Walter Guiteras (ADN) and Miguel Majluf (MNR), and only Majluf had been in the Senate during the previous legislative period. Additionally, four other PODEMOS senators had previous legislative experience, compared to only three for MAS. Moreover one of the PODEMOS senators, Carlos Rauh Böhr, is a respected Bolivian constitutional legal scholar. Without a majority in the powerful Senate, MAS also lacked experienced political heavyweights. Additionally, a pro-MAS legislative coalition in the Senate would require the active participation of both MNR and UN. Shortly after the legislature was installed, a MAS-MNR-UN alliance voted Santa Ramirez (MAS) president of the Senate.<sup>14</sup> A year later, the opposition seized control of the Senate, naming José Villavicencio (UN) as the chamber's president.<sup>15</sup> In 2008, the presidency of the Senate passed to Oscar Ortiz (PODEMOS).<sup>16</sup> In the Chamber of Deputies, in contrast, MAS held a comfortable margin and was able to name Edmundo Novillo as president of the chamber for all three legislative sessions.

But beyond the consequences of not bringing back former senators (after all, MAS had won eight seats in 2002), rise questions of why the party did not include as many incumbents in its list. A comparison with the performance of previous parties is interesting (see Table 3). In 2002, the MNR improved from its 1997 electoral performance by nearly five points. This was a much smaller increase relative to MAS (which improved by more than 20 points from 2002 to 2005), yet the MNR returned more incumbents in 2002 than did MAS in 2005. In the three elections before 2002, a significant number of legislators for the so-called "systemic" parties (ADN, MIR, MNR) had previous experience in political office for that party. Clearly, parties returned fewer incumbents when they outperformed than when they underperformed, relative to the previous election. In 1993, when the MNR increased its vote share by nearly ten points,

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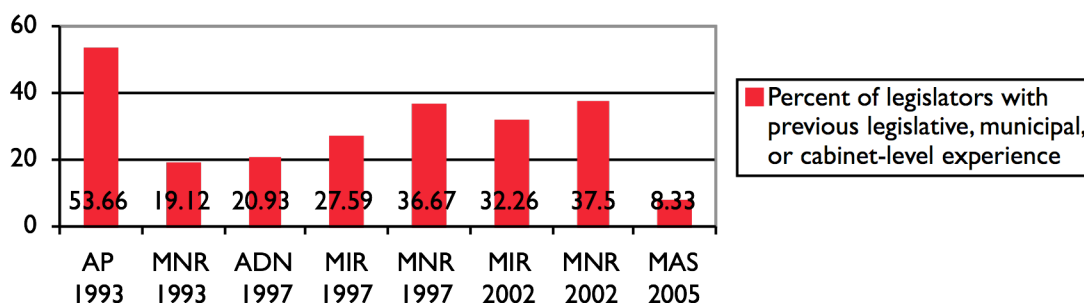
<sup>14</sup> "Ramírez preside el Senado con apoyo de UN y el MNR," *La Razón* (January 19, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> "La oposición toma el control del Senado," *La Razón* (January 21, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> "El MAS se debilita tras perder control del Senado," *La Razón* (January 20, 2008).

winning its largest seat share in any election, nearly a fifth of all its legislators were veteran party figures. In contrast, that year, the losing Patriotic Accord (Acuerdo Patriótico [AP]) ADN-MIR alliance placed a staggering number of incumbents in office (more than half of the alliance's seats). Similarly the MNR returned four incumbents out of eight total seats in 2005. Thus, one should expect MAS to have brought fewer political veterans back in 2005. Yet it brought back substantially fewer (as a percent of total seats won) than the MNR did in 1993.

Figure 3  
Comparison of incumbent reelections by party and election year



Based on CNE data. AP was a single electoral list representing an alliance between ADN and MIR.

But numbers alone cannot tell the whole story, of course. One observation that stands out about the MAS 2005 victory is the lack of continuity of “substantive” personnel. This seems to reflect a pattern across the political evolution of MAS as an electoral vehicle. The second hypothesis predicts that anti-system political figures should have gravitated towards MAS. After all, despite their poor electoral performance, a number of important anti-system figures had long political trajectories in Bolivia.

Evo Morales himself first emerged as a minor (but significant) figure by the 1980s. In 1989, he campaigned in rural Cochabamba on behalf of IU's presidential candidate, Antonio Aranibar. IU was a small electoral alliance that included a number of leftist parties, including: the Bolivian Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Bolivia [PCB]), a social democratic splinter from MIR known as Free Bolivia Movement (Movimiento Bolivia Libre [MBL]), a leftist splinter of the Bolivian Falange, MAS-U, and a number of other smaller leftist factions of various stripes. Though MBL (led by Aranibar) left the alliance in 1993, IU continued to campaign until 1997 (the last year it participated in elections). By the 1990s, Morales had joined longtime Communist organizer, Alejo Véliz, in forming the Assembly for the Peoples' Sovereignty (Asamblea para la Soberanía de los Pueblos [ASP]). In 1997, with Véliz as the IU presidential candidate, Morales was elected a uninominal deputy from Cochabamba, along with three others. A year later, Morales had split with Véliz and established his own People's Instrument for Political Sovereignty (Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos [IPSP]). Unable to secure its registration with the electoral court in time for the 1999 municipal

elections, Morales formed an alliance with David Añez, the leader of MAS-U.<sup>17</sup> In 1999, the MAS-IPSP alliance won an impressive 40 council seats across the department's municipalities. It was from this base in municipal government that MAS would emerge in 2002 as a potent national political force.

Yet few of Morales's fellow travelers from the 1980s and '90s returned in 2002. None of the key figures in the IU alliance returned with MAS in 2002. Instead, the most powerful figure among the MAS legislators was Filemón Escobar, who was elected to the Senate and became the party's legislative spokesperson. A powerful presence in the syndicalist POR, Escobar had not been active in IU. By 2002, Morales and Véliz were bitter enemies, and the latter had joined the NFR electoral list as a uninominal deputy candidate for Cochabamba (he was not elected). Likewise, by 2005 Morales had expelled Escobar from MAS and aligned himself instead with Alvaro Garcia Linera, a former collaborator with Felipe Quispe (the two had founded the EGTK guerrilla group that was active in the 1990s). Both Véliz and Escobar have publicly complained (after their breaks with Morales) that MAS too personalized and lacked institutional constraints on the party leader. Additionally, in 2005, only two of the 40 MAS municipal winners appeared on the party's electoral lists.

### **The 2006 Prefect Elections**

A brief look at the 2005 prefect elections is instructive. As the first such elections in the country's history, the nine prefect elections were highly charged contests. The country's nine prefectures are tasked with coordinating their respective municipal governments, and serve as the agents of regional development projects. More importantly, these were perfectly single-seat, winner-take-all contests: because there are no departmental representative assemblies, prefects have very few institutional checks. Thus, they offer strong incentives for parties to seize significant political resources, particularly in light of the recent regionalist movements.

Despite a resounding presidential victory, MAS did poorly in prefecture contests. Its candidates only won in three departments: Oruro, Potosí, and Chuquisaca (though it has recently lost control of this prefecture to the opposition). The prefectures of the three most populous departments (La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz) were won by PODEMOS-backed opposition candidates.<sup>18</sup> Two of these were well known

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<sup>17</sup> The "U" stands for Unzaguista, after the Unzaga de la Vega, the founder of Bolivia's fascist Socialist Falange (Falange Socialista Boliviana [FSB]). Though the alliance with MAS-U is odd, it is not an uncommon event in Bolivian politics.

<sup>18</sup> In Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, winning candidates did not campaign under the PODEMOS banner. But their campaigns were heavily coordinate with the PODEMOS national campaign, which publicly endorsed them. The Cochabamba electoral vehicle was Cochabamba Unity Alliance (Alianza Unidad Cochabambina [AUN]), led by NFR's Manfred Reyes Villa. The Santa Cruz electoral vehicle was Autonomy for Bolivia (Autonomía Para Bolivia [APB]), led by Ruben Costas, a regionalist leader.

establishment figures. In La Paz, the new prefect was José Luis Paredes (MIR); in Cochabamba it was Reyes Villa (NFR). Though the winner in Santa Cruz, Ruben Costas, had not previously held elected office, his status as a former president of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee (Comité Cívico Pro Santa Cruz) clearly made him an “establishment” figure (though of the new regionalist mold). Surprisingly, the MNR managed to win one prefecture: Tarija. There, the head of its 2002 legislative delegation, Mario Cossio, won a narrow victory over MIR’s Jaime Paz Zamora.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the MNR candidate placed a close second in Santa Cruz.<sup>20</sup>

Of the nine MAS prefect candidates, only two had been elected in 2002 and one other had been a plurinominal candidate (but failed to win a seat). Manuel Morales Davila, a uninominal deputy from La Paz, and Jorge Alvarado Rivas, a uninominal deputy from Cochabamba, were both defeated. Alberto Luis Aguilar, who had failed to win a seat in 2002, was the only MAS prefect elected who had previously appeared as a candidate for the party. Additionally, two other MAS prefect candidates had previous political experience. Hugo Salvatierra, the MAS candidate for Santa Cruz had previously failed to win a uninominal seat as a candidate for Eje-Pachakuti in 1997.<sup>21</sup> Felipe Saucedo, the MAS prefect candidate for Pando, had previously been elected as a senator for MNR in 1997 and 2002.

Like the inability to secure control over the Senate, the loss of six prefectures (seven, after June 2008)<sup>22</sup> to the opposition has severely constrained the MAS government. More than any legislative opposition, it is the hostile prefects who serve as the key institutional check on Morales’s presidential power. A comparison between presidential and aggregate prefecture votes tells a bleak story: While Evo Morales won 1,544,374 votes across the country, MAS prefect candidates combined only managed 942,913.

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<sup>19</sup> Cossio actually campaigned under a new banner: Path to Change (Camino al Cambio [CC]). But the campaign was heavily recognized as an MNR campaign, and Cossio was identified on the ballot with the colors and symbols of the MNR. Paz Zamora campaigned under the banner Regional Convergence (Convergencia Regional [CR]) and was the PODEMOS-backed candidate.

<sup>20</sup> In Santa Cruz, the MNR campaigned as A3-MNR, in alliance with a citizen’s group “A3” (Alianza Trabajo Responsabilidad Eficiencia y Seguridad). Its candidate was Freddy Soruco, a police general, with no previous political experience.

<sup>21</sup> In 1997, Eje-Pachakuti represented a new alliance between the radical wing of the *katarista* movement and old-line Trotskyites. Hugo Salvatierra represented the latter half of that alliance. Before adopting its indigenous orientation, Eje (then Eje de Convergencia Patriótica [Axis of Patriotic Convergence]) had participated in IU.

<sup>22</sup> Chuquisaca voters went to the polls in June 29, 2008, to elect a new prefect. The election was the final resolution to a longstanding dispute after the MAS prefect, David Sánchez, resigned in August 2007. A key political conflict was the issue of national capital: Sucre is still the “constitutional” capital (the seat of government was moved after a brief civil war won by La Paz) and many there wanted the constituent assembly to again declare the city the national capital. Since the conflict, Chuquisaca has slowly moved into the pro-autonomy camp. In 2008, Chuquisaca voters elected Sabina Cuellar, a Quechua-speaker with a long record in the rural-indigenous political organization who also favors regional autonomy.

## Conclusion

The analysis presented here is, of course, preliminary. Additional fieldwork in Bolivia (scheduled for 2009-2010) may yield a different picture. Nevertheless, the evidence so far suggests the following:

- While the party system may appear to have “collapsed” between 2002 and 2005, former political attachments still carry significant weight. If Bolivian political parties were in many ways un-institutionalized and “inchoate,” there nevertheless remains a degree of attachment that binds politicians together.
- While there are continuities between the 2005 election and earlier political periods, a significant number of new political actors have entered the scene. Many, like Santa Cruz prefect Ruben Costas, have little previous partisan attachments and represent neither a desire to return to the pre-2003 status quo nor the evolution of a consistent anti-system trajectory. This suggests that while there is a significant degree of political dealignment away from the earlier party structures, there is also substantial realignment towards new political cleavages (most notably, regional ones) and involving new political actors.
- Consistent with conventional wisdom, PODEMOS best represents a “catch-all” party for former established political figures and opponents of MAS.
- At the same time, despite bearing the brunt of the anti-system protests in October 2003, the MNR remains a significant (even if diminished) party. It also exhibits signs of party cohesion and discipline.
- Contrary to expectations, MAS did not become a “catch-all” party for anti-system political figures. Additionally, the party lost a considerable number of its important figures, both in before and after 2002. This makes it difficult to clearly identify MAS as a resurgent “national left” (as Molina 2006 argues) or as the heir of an “indigenous” political movement (as Madrid 2007 suggests).<sup>23</sup>

These, of course, are preliminary observations based on currently available data and past fieldwork experience. A more careful and systematic gathering of biographical information for candidates—including municipal-level data, which I have not yet fully processed—will present a much fuller picture of Bolivia’s political class. Similarly, the inclusion of candidate lists for the 2006 Constituent Assembly election (left out of this analysis) will no doubt also contribute to our understanding of changes in Bolivia’s contemporary political landscape.

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<sup>23</sup> While MAS does present itself today as an “indigenous” party through the use of rhetoric, symbols, and political performance, this should be contrasted to its political evolution outside the *katarista* movement. Rather than organizing through *ayllus* (small, ethnic-based communities), the *cocaleros* and other key constituencies of MAS are organized along sectoral, syndicalist lines.

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