

CHAPTER II

DEMOCRATIZATION AS NATION-BUILDING: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

My study of Bolivia's democratic experience contributes to the democratization literature that has charted the progress of the "third wave" of democracy (see 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. Most of these studies also demonstrate a normative bias in favor of democracy, a normative bias I, too, share. This bias in favor democracy, combined with a marked institutionalist perspective (that is, a 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 (see especially Sartori 1994; Reilly 2001; Reynolds 2002; Norris 2004). Likewise, 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.

This dissertation also contributes to the literature on democratic theory, particularly in terms of a conceptual relationship between democracy and "the Nation." Though most democratization studies adopt a pluralist definition of democracy, they pay little attention to

the construction of the *demos* beyond the question of individual, liberal rights. Though I, too, subscribe to pluralist democratic theory—largely because of its operational usefulness for comparative studies—this dissertation uses the experience of the Bolivian case to further inform and expand pluralist democratic theory. In particular, this dissertation suggests that comparative democratization studies—especially in developing countries—would do well to integrate issues found in the sociology and anthropology nationalism literature into their analysis.

Democracy, Democratization, and Democratic Consolidation

This section outlines the basic procedural definition of democracy (or “polyarchy”) dominant in studies of “third wave” democracies and used in this dissertation. This definition derives from the pluralist theory of democracy, which has also influenced how many scholars conceptualize “democratization” (the process by which a non-democratic system is transformed into a democratic one) and “democratic consolidation” (the process by which a new democracy is firmly established and institutionalized). By focusing on the procedural norms necessary for democracy, pluralist theory is well suited for the kind of institutionalist orientation found in many comparative democratization studies. More importantly, pluralist theory’s emphasis on empiricism, its recognition that there is no single ideal-type democracy, and its assumption of competitive liberalism fits well with the behaviorist orientation dominant in comparative politics. Nevertheless, there are important implications of pluralist theory that must not be overlooked. I also wish to draw 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 explicitly avoiding ideal-type formulations of what democracy *should be* in favor of an observational assessment of what democracy *is* in recognized democratic polities). 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 civil society exerted control over governing elites. This pluralist theory was grounded in earlier studies (e.g. 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.

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 (see 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, those who adopt the procedural definition of democracy in comparative politics have often focused primarily on electoral politics. 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). In large measure, the 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 direct 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 the 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 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 it "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" (see 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 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 accepts that, from 1985-2002, Bolivia met the requirements for this 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 protections for civil and political liberties such as freedom of the press, speech, and association. 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 four 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, comparative democratization studies also frequently focus on democratic consolidation. A procedural definition is useful to assess when a case has consistently met the minimum threshold and when the procedural minimums outlined necessary for liberal democracy are sufficiently safeguarded. Third, this procedural definition's emphasis on electoral participation and competition fits well with institutionalist studies that focus on the political institutions underlying representative democracy. Finally, a pluralist model is useful for explaining moments of democratic crisis (see 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 in the long term.

Democratization

Democratization can be understood through a dynamic model that consists of three distinct stages 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, and 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) 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 the 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), had 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 democratization model developed by Rustow and Dahl 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 expansion in an competition, and 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 (that is, to establish a consolidated democracy) 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 also fits well with studies of how social movements are able to push for democratization (or other demands), as well as 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 (e.g. 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. It is important to note, however, that the political elites that push for a democratic transformation do not represent a single monolithic entity. There are likely to be important disagreements (ideological, pragmatic, or other) between them. 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 (discussed in Chapter Two). Although this

dissertation's main focus is not the transition to democracy, it is important to understand the country's democratic transition process as part of the historical and institutional context underscoring Bolivia's later democratic experience. Bolivia's democratic transition (1978-1985) was one of the region's longest and most tumultuous, resolved only by a comprise 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 had come increasingly under criticism, particularly by social movements and political elites regularly shut out from the governing consensus.

Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation is frequently used to refer to expectations that democracy will survive and that it is immune to reversal (see Schedler 1998). Although the requirements for democratic consolidation are debated, most scholars agree that stability is a minimal condition for 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 (see 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 (see 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. This dissertation eschews discussion of whether Bolivia's democracy was consolidated by focusing on the more basic

concept of political stability. Nevertheless, several of the concepts used in studies of democratic consolidation are important.

Many important discussions of democratic consolidation 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 (1996) put it more simply: democracy is consolidated when it becomes “the only game in town”. The two authors’ commonly used definition focuses on five arenas: civil society, political society, the 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. More importantly, it can become very 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 and demonstrate their willingness to accept electoral defeat (see 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 more easily 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 (see 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.

An alternate way to address the question of the long-term survival of a democratic system is through Lawrence Whitehead's (2001) conception of democratic "viability" (that is, the ability of a democracy to survive in its environment).¹ Whitehead's framework looks beyond the questions of consolidation and looks instead to questions of what factors may threaten, in the short or long term, the continued existence of the democratic system. He argues that a democracy may be consolidated but not viable; it 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 their society. This requires strong links between institutions and civil society. The concept of viability, however, is closely linked to 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

¹ Whitehead distinguishes viability from both consolidation and institutionalization. Like Eric Selbin (1999), Whitehead 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.

problems, it will likely suffer a legitimacy crisis that may undermine social support for the democratic process.

This dissertation of Bolivia's democracy does not argue that the country's democratic system was either consolidated or viable. My use of democratic stability is more modest: democracy is stable when the basic procedural democratic norms are consistently adhered to. This means, minimally, that electoral calendars are institutionalized and elections go on as scheduled without interruption, that elections are free of fraud and losers accept the outcome, and that no actors attempt to overthrow the democratic system (in simple terms: no coups or other attempts to use extra-constitutional means as a path to power). Thus, this dissertation merely seeks to explain Bolivia's democratic stability from 1985-2002 and why this system became unstable after 2003. A definitive assessment of whether Bolivian democracy was or was not consolidated is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Democracy and “the Nation”

This section draws on the theoretical literature on nationalism and establishes a relationship (both historical and conceptual) between the Nation and democracy. 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 national 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. 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 homogenous (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,² 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, we more easily recognize the cultural character of the national community. Yet 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 argued the relatively recent emergence of nations and nationalism, and outlined nationalism’s close relationship to political and industrial modernization.³ Likewise, the attention by political culture scholars as diverse as Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), Robert Putnam (1994), and Howard Wiarda (2001) on 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 the Nation and *demos*.⁴

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)

² 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.

³ 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).

⁴ Interestingly, the two share an epistemological root. Though most democratic theorists accept *demos* to mean “a people”, Aristotle explicitly stated that *demos* mean “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 organization.

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.⁵

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, 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,⁶ 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

⁵ 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)?

⁶ 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.

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 “homogenous, 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 and who is not a member of the community is the first political question both the Nation and the democratic community 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 homogenous, 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 what I call 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.

If nations are constructed or imagined, then more 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 liberal democracy is a recent phenomenon going back (at the most) only two centuries. 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 are 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 recentness of post-colonial nationalisms, his approach still emphasizes their roots in older ethnic identities.

Unlike Anderson, both Smith and Greenfeld see nations as developing slowly, over centuries, where Anderson sees them moving much more quickly and recently. Another

modernist study of nationalism by John Kelley and Martha Kaplan (2001) goes further, arguing that nationalism (especially in the post-colonial world) is in large measure an artifact of the period following the world wars (that 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 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 re-imagined 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 the national 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. If a polity allows for open discussion of political issues, one of these 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 for contestation the question of the community itself—the *demos* question. I also suggest that nations themselves are frequently 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, some attention to the historical evolution of Bolivian nationalism and the polity’s “national imaginary” is instructive.

Democracy and Political Institutions

This section discusses the relationship between liberal democracy and political institutions, particularly as used in much of the comparative democratization literature and in this dissertation. 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. Thus, researchers have 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 historical processes.

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 (see 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, free and fair elections allow citizens to choose between competing political elites and different policy options. 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 actors agree to use competitive elections as the mechanism 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 (see 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 (see 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 (see 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 representative; consequently minority parties are more likely to campaign independently, rather than seek alliances. Others (e.g. Rokkan and Lipset 1967) have criticized this view, arguing that party systems shaped more by historical legacies—especially cultural cleavages—than by party systems. Nevertheless, several “constitutional engineers” have deliberately worked to solve conflicts in new democracies with electoralist solutions derived (in large measure) from Duverger’s Law (e.g. Reilly 2001; Reynolds 2002; Lijphart and Groffman 1984).

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, organized 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 direct democracy.⁷ Of course, modern, institutionalized political parties are more highly organized and differentiated than simple popular “factions.” In contrast to other political arrangements,

⁷ 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.

electoral democracy allows citizens to choose which elites will govern on their behalf.

Political parties allow voters to organized 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 (e.g. 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 are essentially voting randomly or without clearly articulated 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 influence.⁸ 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

⁸ For a broader discussion of the historical legacies of populism, see Chapter 3.

parliament, voters recognize that the prime minister and his or her cabinet wield executive 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 (see 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 (see 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 (see 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 unstable and less likely to lead to democratic stability than are 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 the *poder moderador*. More recently, presidential democracy is criticized for producing executives with authoritarian tendencies who claim to rule in the name of the people and who attack the legislature (see O'Donnell 1994). 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 of presidential systems are significant and can affect how presidents and assemblies interact (see 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. 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 (see 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 (see 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 (see Deheza 1998).

Research Design and Methods

This dissertation is a single-case study of Bolivia's experience with electoral democracy between 1985 and 2005. 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 (see 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 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 (see 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 3). 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 (see 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 out why Bolivia stands 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 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.

Like the platypus, parliamentarized presidentialism rests uneasily within institutional taxonomies.⁹ This study of Bolivia's democratic experience explores the relationship between its unique institutional design of “parliamentarized presidentialism” and its democratic

⁹ An aquatic, venomous, duck-billed mammal that lays eggs, the platypus has been an outlier in animal taxonomies since its discovery.

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. As such, the driving research questions involves the relationship between the change from a list proportional representation (list-PR) to a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system on parliamentarized presidentialism and, consequently, on 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 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, because 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 hypotheses testing on about attitudinal behavior difficult. Second, because 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 how Bolivia's comparatively stable democracy devolved into acute political crisis is instructive. As previous work 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 new democratic crises, 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.¹⁰ This led me to consider the importance of "civic nationalism" as a necessary component for a democratic political community.¹¹ 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 with it a social

¹⁰ 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 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.

¹¹ For a discussion of "civic nationalism" compared to other forms of nationalism, see Greenfeld 1992.

reformulation or deconstruction of the national question? If so, then the challenges facing democracy in societies with deep 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.

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 5-6. 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 immediate 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 also 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, 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, they 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

[what it does/doesn't tell us about Bolivia ... other cases ...]
[the study ends w/ 2005 election, and does not go beyond]
[outline a future research agenda?]