

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BOLIVIAN INSTITUTIONAL MODEL

This chapter provides a brief descriptive overview of Bolivia's unique institutional design. I follow René Antonio Mayorga in calling this system "parliamentarized presidentialism" (1997), though others have at times labeled it "assembly-independent" (Shugart and Carey 1992) or "hybrid presidentialism" (Gamarra 1996).<sup>1</sup> There has been extensive debate in the literature about the role of institutional design in new democracies, with special attention given to the role of executive-legislative relations in presidential democracies (that is, the relationship between presidents and legislatures), as well as the role of political parties and party systems. Much of the contemporary discussion of executive-legislative relations was initiated by Juan Linz (1990; 1994), who argued that presidential systems were inherently unstable and less likely than parliamentary systems to lead to democratic consolidation, especially in Latin America. Such a charge fit well with new institutionalist research, which showed that weak or poorly designed political institutions hindered democratic regimes throughout the region.

Bolivia's model of parliamentarized presidentialism involves a convergence of different political institutional design elements that revolve around the electoral laws and a constitutional provision that, from the 1985 to the 2002 elections, dictated how presidents

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<sup>1</sup> Shugart and Carey's term is accurately descriptive: though Bolivia's executive was, until recently, elected by the assembly, the executive's power was independent of the assembly (making it different than a parliamentary system, where the executive power depends on continued parliamentary confidence). Gamarra's term is also accurate (since this is, literally, a hybrid system that mixes elements of presidentialism and parliamentarism). But because the term "hybrid presidentialism" is also commonly used to describe the premier-presidentialism (used in countries such as France, Germany, or Russia) using it to describe Bolivia is merely confusing. I prefer "parliamentarized presidentialism" because it easily describes an otherwise presidential system that is marked by some attributes of parliamentary democracy.

were elected. These institutional constraints significantly affected the behavior and strategies of political elites, reflected in the type of party system that evolved. Similarly, these institutional constraints influenced the kind of coalition-building norms adopted by political elites. Thus, this chapter:

1. Outlines the Bolivian constitutionally proscribed institutional model of parliamentarized presidentialism in place during the democratic period.
2. Describes the various electoral systems in place during the different electoral periods.
3. Describes the political party system as it has evolved across that time.
4. Describes the coalition-building norms developed by political elites to craft majoritarian multiparty coalitions.

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

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

Bolivia's institutional design and the nearly two decades of political stability the country enjoyed.

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

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

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

Evidence from Bolivia is relevant for other Latin American cases (e.g. Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela) that have recently undergone a crisis of their party system. After October 2003, the Bolivian party system was clearly in crisis, with traditional (or "systemic") parties in decline. In large measure, this dissertation suggests that changes in the electoral system altered parties' bargaining strategies and encouraged polarization, fragmentation, and antagonism. Yet the pre-2003 Bolivian experience suggests that a parliamentarized presidential system limit some of the problems commonly associated with presidentialism without the dramatic (and unlikely) switch to a "pure" parliamentary system. Between 1985 and 2002, Bolivia's electoral system coincided with a centripetal multiparty system that was

both able to accommodate new parties and also encouraged consociational political bargaining. I do not suggest that parliamentarized presidentialism should be adopted, unchanged, by any particular case. Rather, I suggest that a democratic system designed along similar underlying principles could help provide both governmental stability and centripetal political competition. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the Bolivian model may help institutional designers seeking to strengthen and expand democracy throughout the region and beyond.

### **Bolivia's Political Geography**

Though this dissertation focuses on Bolivia's "general elections" (elections for president and parliament), it is important to understand the country's basic political geography. Bolivia is constitutionally a unitary republic divided (since 1938) into nine departments: La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Potosí, Chuquisaca, Tarija, Santa Cruz, Beni, and Pando.<sup>2</sup> The nine departments are administrative divisions, not sub-governmental divisions; a prefect, who is appointed by the central state, oversees each department.<sup>3</sup> Departments are further subdivided into varying numbers provinces, municipalities, and cantons. Of these smaller subdivisions, only municipalities are significant. The 1994 Ley de Participación Popular created and empowered local municipal governments as semi-autonomous governmental and administrative units.<sup>4</sup> This dissertation, however, does not analyze

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<sup>2</sup> At its founding in 1826, the country had five administrative departments: Chuquisaca, La Paz, Potosí, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. That same year, Oruro was created as a separate administrative department. Tarija was created in 1831, Beni in 1842, and Pando in 1938.

<sup>3</sup> Although the 2005 election included elections for prefect, the departmental prefectures are still constitutionally bound to serve as representatives of the central state in their department. And while they were elected by popular vote, they could (in theory) be removed from office by the chief executive.

<sup>4</sup> Before 1994, municipalities were primarily known as *secciones de provincia* (sections of province) and were merely smaller administrative units within the prefecture system. Except for large cities (department capitals), there were no municipal elections until 1995.

municipal elections. Rather, this dissertation focuses on the six general elections (1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2002, and 2005) held since the establishment of democracy.

Attention to Bolivia's nine departments is important because these also constitute the country's chief electoral districts. A discussion of how these districts are part of the electoral system follows later in this chapter. Here, I wish to note that these departments also coincide with geographic and cultural regions. For a topographical and political map of Bolivia, see Figure 1. Geographically, Bolivia is often divided into four regional "zones" which cross department lines (see Romero Ballivián 2003).

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

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

3. The Amazon and tropical savannahs cover most of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, northern La Paz (the Yungas), and eastern Cochabamba (the Chapare). These areas are in the lowlands of the Amazon basin and have smaller native indigenous population (Guarani-speakers are the most numerous of these).<sup>5</sup>

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

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<sup>5</sup> Migration from western Andean regions (the Altiplano and Cordillera Real) towards the lowlands has been significant. Interestingly, these immigrants tend to assimilate into lowland culture, rather than emphasize their "indigenesness" (as with immigrants to the Andean cities), with the notable exception of those who migrated to Cochabamba's Chapare region.

For the sake of simplification, I have divided departments into two categories: Andean and *media luna*. While this classification is somewhat reductionist, it coincides with the current Bolivian political lexicon, which uses these terms to describe the country's regional cleavage. I also use the term "*media luna*" without giving it any normative value. While "eastern lowlands" is an alternate categorization for those departments, the term is problematic because some of the *media luna* departments are neither in the east, nor in the lowlands. Similarly, the term "Andean" is here used more in a cultural (as opposed to a geographical) sense. Both political elites and voters in those departments tend to clearly articulate themselves as being culturally "Andean," even if they live in geographically "lowland" regions (e.g. the Yungas and Chapare).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bolivia’s democratic experience is divided into three distinct institutional periods (or “cases”), each coinciding with a different set of elections. The first period includes the 1985,

1989, and 1993 elections. This period immediately followed the country's transition to democracy and witnessed the emergence of a relatively stable party system that revolved around three major parties: the MNR, ADN, and MIR. This period also consolidated the basic political strategies that mark the system of parliamentarized presidentialism. This period is discussed in Chapter 5.

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

The third period encompasses the recent political crisis and the 2005 election. Although it used the same electoral rules as the 1997 and 2002 elections, the 2005 election was the first in which none of the systemic parties was a substantial force during the campaign (only one, the MNR, even put forward a list of candidates). The 2005 election was also marked by a congruence of political forces around two electoral lists: Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and Poder Democrático y Social (Podemos). This current period was marked by two events: the first direct popular election of a president since democratization and the possible emergence of a two-party system. The direct election of departmental prefects in 2005 also substantially altered Bolivian politics. While the recently installed Evo



Morales government is beyond the scope of this dissertation (which uses his inauguration as the end-point for analysis), there is little doubt that the 2005 election has significantly altered Bolivia's political landscape. This period is discussed in Chapter 7.

The remainder of this chapter gives a more detailed outline of Bolivia's institutional design, and its changes, during all three periods. While there have been dramatic changes over the course of six elections, the overall institutional framework for democratic politics in Bolivia has, in most ways, remained the same. In part, some of these are historical legacies, such as the organizational nature of Bolivian political parties. Others, have been learned and carried over from one institutional period to the next, such as the coalition-building strategies based on power-sharing quotas established between allied political parties.

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

## Parliamentarized Presidentialism

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

1. The election of the president by the legislature.
2. The use of a fused ballot that binds presidential and parliamentary candidates in single, closed party list.<sup>6</sup>
3. Coalition-building norms that ensure multiparty majoritarian government.

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

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<sup>6</sup> I use “parliament” to describe the Bolivian legislature. While the legislative body (when referring to both the House of Deputies and the Senate) is officially called the National Congress, Bolivians most often refer to the body as *el parlamento*. Individual members are most frequently identified as either *diputado* or *senador*.

## Parliamentary Election of the Executive

The election of the president by parliament is done by joint, public session of the newly elected parliament. The vote becomes the representative body's first order of business and is an oral vote, taken by roll call. In case of a tie, the delegates vote twice more, until a presidential candidate wins a majority of parliamentary votes (delegates can abstain).<sup>7</sup> If, after the third and final vote, no candidate has yet won an absolute majority, then the candidate who won a plurality of the popular vote is named president. The provision for parliamentary election of the chief executive was first introduced in the 1851 Constitution, though at least one recent account erroneously credits it as being introduced in 1956 (when the 1947 Constitution was ratified).<sup>8</sup> The provision was used only once in the nineteenth century and twice in the 1940s. Despite several new constitutions and constitutional reforms since 1851, the provision was little changed. The form adopted in 1878 remained in place until the 1994 constitutional reforms (which became the 1995 Constitution). For a comparison of changes to this provision over time, see Table 3.1.

Interestingly, the provision for parliamentary election of the executive was not immediately used by Bolivia's political elites during the transition to democracy. Following the 1979 and 1980 elections, disagreement among rival political leaders made parliamentary election of a president difficult. Rather than electing a president, both the 1979 and 1980 parliaments instead appointed an interim executive charged with holding new elections. The restoration of civilian government in 1982 followed a political agreement by members of the

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<sup>7</sup> Delegates can also cast "spoiled" ballots by voting for names not on the prescribed list of eligible candidates.

<sup>8</sup> The 2005 *Elections in the Americas* data handbook entry on Bolivia (written by, Jorge Lazarte, former head of Bolivian National Electoral Court) briefly mentions that the provision for parliamentary election of the president was introduced in "the constitution of 1956" (see p. 127), by which he must mean the 1947 Constitution, which was ratified in 1956.

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

Table 3.1

Constitutional provisions outlining parliamentary election of the executive

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

Prior to the 1994 constitutional reforms (Law 1585), which became the 1995 Constitution, parliament was empowered to select a president from among the top three presidential candidates. The change streamlined the selection process to make a potential parliamentary impasse less likely and was also clearly aimed at preventing a repeat of the 1989 election. That year, a deadlock in parliament between the two front-runners, Hugo Banzer and Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, was broken when parliament selected the third-place candidate, Jaime Paz Zamora.<sup>9</sup> The 1994 modification of Article 90, however, was a compromise solution. After 1989, the three major parties (ADN, MNR, and MIR) advanced different proposals to modify the presidential election. Both ADN and MIR advocated presidential election by simple plurality, rather than absolute majority. The MNR, in contrast, advocated a French-style runoff election, where voters would choose between the top two candidates. In the end, neither proposal was adopted, leaving parliamentary election of the executive the default compromise choice, though it was modified to limit parliament to vote between the two candidates with the most popular votes.

### **The Electoral System**

The use of a fused ballot, closed list electoral system means that votes cast for presidential candidates also determines party seat distributions in the country's nine electoral districts. This subtle difference distinguishes parliamentarized presidentialism from other so-called "hybrid" or "mixed" systems. Bolivia's system is thus parliamentarized, unlike 1932-1973 Chile (which also allowed for the legislative assembly to elect the president if no

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<sup>9</sup> Sánchez de Lozada was the 1989 plurality winner (by a slim margin) over Banzer. But with parliamentary parties divided almost into thirds, none of the three candidates was willing to give up the presidency. Since an impasse would make Sánchez de Lozada president, Banzer ordered his party's deputies and senators to vote for Paz Zamora, with whom he crafted a political agreement that gave ADN (and Banzer) a powerful role in the government administration.

candidate won a clear majority).<sup>10</sup> Bolivia's system is also more presidential than post-1996 Israel (in which prime ministers are elected by direct popular election).<sup>11</sup> That a subtle difference such as ballot structure could have profound consequences implies that constitutional engineers could achieve substantive changes with minor institutional reforms. The constitutional provision for legislative election of the president encouraged (among political elites) a culture of negotiated bargaining that, from 1985 through 2002, produced stable, majoritarian coalition government. Multipartyism, coupled with the use of proportional representation formulas, has meant that Bolivian presidents from 1985 through 2002 were chosen after intense coalition-building negotiations. These parliamentary features qualify the Bolivian system as a true hybrid.

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

Before the adoption of a mixed-member electoral system in 1994 (first used in the 1997 election), voters were given a simple ballot with the names of presidential candidates, the candidates' pictures, and the name, colors, and symbols of the candidates' political parties. Voters marked a simple check box under their presidential candidate choice. Beginning in 1997, voters faced two vote choices: the first for the presidential candidate and the second for their "uninominal" representative to the House of Deputies (just over half

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<sup>10</sup> Chile's system was not "parliamentarized" because it still included separate elections for the president and assembly. The ability of the legislature to elect a president did not eliminate the problem of dual legitimacy (voters cast votes for presidential and legislative candidates independently) and did not include strong coalition-building incentives.

<sup>11</sup> Israel's parliamentary system is not "presidentialized" despite the separate election of executive because the prime minister is still subject to votes of confidence.

the chamber is elected directly by popular vote in single-seat districts).<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the final composition of parliament depended on the “presidential” portion of the ballot. Since the 1994 reforms adopted a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system, the remaining lower house seats were compensatory seats awarded based on a proportional representation formula.<sup>13</sup> The Senate is still elected entirely based on the presidential vote. Likewise, political parties retain a monopoly on candidate nomination.<sup>14</sup>

Party seat distribution is determined by votes in nine electoral districts corresponding to Bolivia’s nine administrative departments. Each department is guaranteed three senators. The party with the most votes in each department is awarded two senators; the party with the second most votes is awarded one senator. Seats in the House of Deputies are awarded based on the departments’ relative population (based on the most recent census). The same electoral formula is used in each department, regardless of the number of their total number of deputies. Thus, larger departments tend to have more proportional outcomes (and a greater representation of smaller parties). Use of departments as electoral districts also means that total seat shares can be quite different than what national vote totals would suggest.

Use of departments as electoral districts has become increasingly significant as the *media luna* increases in population relative to Andean departments. Seat reapportionment has

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<sup>12</sup> Representatives elected to the House of Deputies are differentiated by how they are elected. Those elected directly from single-seat districts are called *uninominales*; those elected by proportional representation are called *plurinominales*.

<sup>13</sup> The mixed-member proportional system is also known in some countries as the additional member system (AMS).

<sup>14</sup> Changes to the constitution in 2004 (Law 2631) ended the monopoly of political parties as the instruments of representative democracy. These were changes superficial changes, however. The new provision expands representative democracy to “parties, civic groups, and indigenous peoples.” But each of these groups must officially register with the National Electoral Court in order to run candidate lists in any election (national or municipal). Thus, I treat these groups simply as “political parties” no different than before the 2004 changes.

recently become a difficult political issue—even threatening to derail the 2005 election.<sup>15</sup> As the data presented in subsequent chapters demonstrate, since 1985 political power has gradually shifted away from Andean departments to the *media luna*. Each subsequent reapportionment (before the 1997 and 2005 elections) increased the net number of seats allocated to the *media luna* and reduced the net number of Andean seats. There is also a significantly disproportional voter-to-seat ratio between departments. This disproportionality principally affects larger departments, which are under-represented (a higher voter-to-seat ratio); conversely, smaller departments are over-represented. But the net result has been that *media luna* departments (taken as a whole) have been over-represented in the House of Deputies. Likewise, *media luna* departments have also steadily increased their total share of representation in the lower house. Table 3.2 shows differences in seat apportionment between departments across time.

Issues of seat apportionment are important because, until 2005, parliament elected the president. Because the parliamentary election is made by a joint session of the two chambers, the over-representation of lowland departments is increased. Since seats in the Senate are set at three seats per department, the four lowland departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, and Tarija have consistently held 44.4% of the upper house. In a joint session of the legislative assembly, the total number of seats is 157, making 79 the number of votes necessary to elect a president. The four *media luna* departments have held 54 seats (34.4%) between 1985 and 1993, 57 seats (36.3%) between 1997 and 2002, and 60 seats (38.2%) in 2005. Of course, such figures mean Andean departments continue to hold a supermajority of seats in both legislative chambers.

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<sup>15</sup> Because seat apportionment has followed census data, it has not kept up with the rapid increase in Bolivia's urban population, which is concentrated in the three metropolitan areas of La Paz-El Alto, Santa Cruz, and Cochabamba. Although La Paz has often been the most under-represented department, many in Santa Cruz (historically a "frontier" department) have pushed this as a salient political issue.



Table 3.2

## Seat apportionment by department, 1985-2005

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

Table 3.2—Continued

## Seat apportionment by department, 1985-2005

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

Data provided by the National Electoral Court.

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

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

Between 1985 and 1997 different proportional formulas were used to allocate seats in the House of Deputies (see Table 3.3). Since 1967, seats were awarded using a D'Hondt formula. The D'Hondt method uses a highest averages (or quotient) formula that allocates seats, starting with the party with the highest quotient and working down. This method tends to over-compensate large parties and diminish the representation of smaller parties. The 1989 election used a double quotient formula meant to further depress the representation of smaller parties. The 1993 election used a Sainte-Laguë formula that,

though similar to the D'Hondt method, uses only odd quotients and tends to increase the representation of smaller parties.

Table 3.3

Election counting rules and their general effects, 1985-2005

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

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

Each of these reforms had the expected result. Though the effective number of parties consistently declined from 1985 to 1993, the absolute number of parties that won representation to the lower house went from ten in 1985, to five in 1989, to eight in 1993. The change to a mixed-member electoral system in 1994 re-introduced a D'Hondt seat allocation formula, along with a 3% electoral threshold. This electoral formula was used consistently in 1997, 2002, and 2005.

### The Party System

This "parliamentarized" system also operates within a multiparty system. The use of proportional electoral formulas—including MMP—has concurred with a multiparty system,

consistent with the expectations of “Duverger’s law.”<sup>16</sup> The total number of candidate lists participating in elections has fluctuated from a high of eighteen (in 1985) to a low of eight (in 2005). But merely looking at the number of lists is deceptive. Candidate lists are often formed by pre-electoral alliances involving two or more parties. An analysis of Bolivia’s party system is further complicated because many political parties are not institutionalized, often serving merely as factional or personal vehicles.

Defining a political party in the context of Bolivian elections can be conceptually difficult. The problem arises from distinguishing institutionalized parties from mere personalistic vehicles, populist vehicles, or factional wings within a party. Using a normative distinction between “parties” and “personalistic vehicles” is inadequate because nearly all of the parties have, since their founding, been dominated by a single leader (or *candillo*) and there has been little, if any, leadership turnover.<sup>17</sup> Even the MNR, founded in 1941 was dominated by Paz Estenssoro until the 1980s, and by Sánchez de Lozada since. Similarly, distinguishing between “parties” and “factions” is equally difficult because some factions (e.g. MIR-BL) go on to become clearly independent political parties in their own right. Because this dissertation focuses on electoral politics, I instead adopt a simpler conceptualization: For simplicity, this dissertation uses the term “electoral list” (or “candidate list”) rather than “party list” to describe a slate of candidates in any election. This distinction is useful because it recognizes pre-electoral alliances as a single list, without implying any information about the lists’ status as a party. Thus, for example, the joint

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<sup>16</sup> Maurice Duverger (1957) posited that proportional electoral formulas tend to produce multiparty systems, while plurality (or first-past-the-post) electoral formulas tend to two-party systems. Other scholars have challenged “Duverger’s law” by pointing out that party systems have roots in, and are shaped by, social cleavages, and themselves install electoral systems to protect their interests (essentially inverting the causal relationship). See Rokkan and Lipset (1967)

<sup>17</sup> While some parties (e.g. MNR, MIR, ADN) recently adopted internal democratic or participatory institutions in the 1990s, these have tended to be weak and ineffective in generating new leadership. This contributed to the decline in the public confidence and legitimacy of political parties.

ADN-MIR electoral alliance of 1993 is a single list, even though it was comprised of at least four separate parties (ADN, MIR, PDC, FRI). Similarly, I qualify Podemos (Jorge Quiroga's 2005 electoral vehicle) as an "electoral list" rather than as a political party. In keeping with standard conventions, however, I use "party" (e.g. "effective number of parties") rather than "list" in subsequent discussion.

The remainder of this section gives a general overview of Bolivia's party system as it relates to the period under study (1985-2005). For detailed histories of the country's parties and their evolution over time, see Isaác Sandoval Rodríguez (1999), Mario Rolón Anaya (1999), and Salvador Romero Ballivián (2003). Here, I am primarily concerned with describing how parties fit within the party system. It is important to note that classifying Bolivian parties along a traditional left-right ideological spectrum is difficult because few parties (including the largest ones) are ideologically or doctrinally committed. As noted earlier, the populist model of organization inherited as a legacy of the 1952 Revolution produced a series of parties that, in many ways, organizationally imitate the MNR. One common characteristic is for parties to seek broad cross-sectorial alliances with different movements or groups. Similarly, the ideological reference point for many parties is 1952, rather than an "international" left-right orientation. One notices that few Bolivian parties use the term "party" in their title—the tendency is to use terms such as "movement" or "front."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, many of the parties that emerged in during the democratic transition were simply factions of the post-1952 MNR coalition.<sup>19</sup> Though somewhat reductionist, one

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<sup>18</sup> The few exceptions to this rule are notable because they are consciously "international" in orientation. These include the Christian democratic PDC, the Soviet-line Communist Party, and the Trotskyite POR (which is closely tied to the Fourth International). Despite their influence among intellectual circles, none of these parties has had independent electoral success.

<sup>19</sup> These include Siles Zuazo's MNRI (which made up the core of the UDP alliance), Walter Guevara Arce's PRA, Roberto Jordán Pando's AFIN-MNR, Carlos Serrate Reich's MNRV, Lydia Guillen Tejada's PRIN,

can also describe the post-transition party system as a constellation of patron-client networks, with state patronage as the network's currency. Nevertheless, there are noticeable differences between parties.

Bolivian scholars who analyze the party system tend to categorize parties along both ideological and structural dimensions. Roberto Laserna (1992) developed a typology that placed parties along two dimensions: ideological commitment (split into programmatic, populist, and dogmatic categories) and level of institutionalization (distinguishing between low and high). Moira Zuazo (1999) focused on two dimensions: a left-to-right policy orientation and type of internal structure (distinguishing between seigniorial and popular). Ricardo Pereyra (2000) categorized parties based on the leadership structure (strong to weak) and the type of change advocated (moderate to radical). See Table 3.5 for an overview.

I adopt a simpler classification scheme that fits with the conventional, popular usage and distinguishes Bolivia's political parties into three basic categories:

1. The so-called "systemic" parties, which have adopted a liberal-pluralist discourse (which includes support for neoliberal economic policy) and dominated electoral politics from 1985 to 2002.

2. The nepopulist (or "outsider") parties that combine a mix of traditional Latin American populist organizational style, but have accommodated themselves to neoliberal politics.

3. The so-called "antisystemic" parties that advocate radical structural change and directly challenge the neoliberal status quo.

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and Guillermo Bedregal's MNR-U. Several of these either rejoined the MNR by the late 1980s, though many remained independent.

Additionally, I borrow some of the conceptual categories developed by Michael Coppedge (1997) to describe parties in later chapters.<sup>20</sup>

Two other types of parties, which do not easily fit into this categorization, are worth noting. The first, are the indigenous (or *katarista*) parties. These include parties that have accommodated themselves within the systemic liberal-pluralist discourse (e.g. MRTKL) and those that have advocated radical antisystemic change (e.g. MIP). Indigenous parties, however, have not historically fared well in Bolivian elections (in contrast to indigenous parties in Ecuador); Bolivian political life has remained principally an urban, *mestizo* affair.

The second group of parties includes orthodox Marxist or other ideologically “socialist” parties. Like indigenous parties, these have had limited success, exercising little influence beyond certain intellectual circles and university campuses. The Bolivian left was influential in the transition to democracy, forming the bulk of the UDP government. In 1985, the electorate shifted decidedly away from the left. Only MIR survived, in large part by distancing itself from its earlier ideological leftist position and moving closer towards the political center, becoming one of the three systemic parties.

### **Systemic Parties**

Traditionally, the systemic parties are the three largest parties that emerged from the 1985 election as identified by René Antonio Mayorga (1991; 1995):

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<sup>20</sup> While I borrow concepts such as “Center-Left” and “Christian Right” from Coppedge, I do not always agree with some of his assessments of specific parties as he applies them to Bolivia.

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

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

Defining “systemic” parties more broadly includes several minor parties that have consistently supported the three parties in government. These are: the Frente Revolucionario de Izquierda (FRI), a long-time ally of MIR; the Partido Democrático Cristiano (PDC), a long-time ally of ADN; the Movimiento Bolivia Libre (MBL), a former faction of MIR that eventually became a steadfast ally of MNR; and the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari de Liberación (MRTKL), a *katarista* party that has supported the MNR since 1993.

### **Populist Parties**

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

1. Conciencia de Patria (Condepa)
2. Unidad Cívica Solidaridad (UCS)



### 3. Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR)

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

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

### **Antisystemic Parties**

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

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

Both of these parties emerged from small, unsuccessful electoral fronts that had long challenged the neoliberal system. MAS had been one of the minor members of various leftist alliances (FPU, IU) led by the Communist Party. Similarly, MIP emerged from within the

radicalized *katarista* movement associated with the Marxist Eje-Pachakuti. In many ways, MAS and MIP represent traditional Latin American populist (as opposed to neopopulist) movements. In other ways, however, the two borrow from an older Bolivian political tradition: syndicalism. While loosely “un-ideological,” the two parties borrow heavily from the populist “style” of politics (mass rallies, marches, leaders who demonstrate their closeness to “the people,” etc.). But unlike traditional populist or neopopulist movements, these parties are substantially more institutionalized. MIP is sustained both by the Confederation of Peasant Syndicates (CSUTCB) and the organization of *ayllus* (indigenous communal units) around Lake Titicaca. MAS grew out of the *cocalero* syndicates of the Chapare region, from which it began establishing a network of alliances with other peasant, trade, labor syndicates throughout the country.

### **Coalition-Building Norms**

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

The Bolivian style of coalition-building was facilitated by the other features of parliamentarized presidentialism, but was born out of immediate political necessity and machination. In 1985, in the midst of an economic crisis, political elites hoped to avoid the

kind of impasse that prevented the election of an executive in 1979 and 1980. Paz Estenssoro was elected by a parliamentary coalition of leftist parties in order to prevent Banzer (a former dictator and the electoral front-runner) from legitimately assuming the executive office. Needing strong parliamentary support for his government's economic recovery program—and hoping to avoid the experience of the weak UDP government—Paz Estenssoro sought a coalition alliance with Banzer's ADN weeks after assuming office. The success of the MNR-ADN government (1985-1989)—when measured by its ability to give the president strong parliamentary support—was apparent. Every subsequent government (until the current MAS government) relied on a formal coalition agreement between two or more parties.

Until 2002, these coalition governments involved an intricate balancing act between three systemic parties (MNR, ADN, MIR) in what can be described as a “tripod” system. During the 1990s, coalitions were also sustained in large measure by the accommodation of the new populist parties. Thus, though coalitions centered around two political “blocs” (MNR and ADN-MIR), there was significant agreement between the major political actors on the economic and political paradigm—namely, a neoliberal economic model combined with liberal-pluralist representative democracy. This dissertation does not explore whether coalition-building strategies were facilitated because of a shared “ideological space” between the major players (that is, they develop strategies based on cooperation) or whether the ensuing stability resulted from a form of “Nash equilibrium” (a non-cooperative balance established because no player benefits from adopting a new strategy). What is relevant here is simply that political elites did not deviate from coalition bargaining behavior between 1989 through 2002 based on rather predictable (in hindsight) patterns of behavior.

Table 3.4

## Coalition and opposition parties, 1985-2005

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

After 2002, the coalition norms broke down as new actors—particularly MAS and MIP—adopted radically different political strategies. Unlike the neopopulist parties, which were accommodated into the political system and participated in coalition-bargaining, these new parties adopted “go it alone” strategies that preceded the eventual dismantling of the

existing political system. In large measure this dissertation explores how formal institutions that facilitated political stability between 1985 and 2002 were no longer able to maintain such stability by 2002. It is unclear whether coalition politics has a future in Bolivia. Evo Morales won the 2005 election with a simple majority; MAS was not required to bargain with other parties for parliamentary election. Thus, Morales and MAS lack incentives to discard zero-sum political strategies for cooperative ones.

### **Referendum Democracy**

The 2004 constitutional reforms introduced referendum or plebiscite democracy in Bolivia. Prior to the reforms, formal political life was explicitly restricted to political parties and the institutions of representative democracy. The reforms—which included the right of unelected individual citizens or civic associations to introduce legislative proposals—were meant to expand the participatory nature of Bolivian democracy. As of this writing, Bolivians have voted in only one referendum—the July 2004 hydrocarbons referendum—though they are scheduled to vote in July 2005 on a referendum on regional (that is, departmental) political autonomy.

Despite the theoretically more “participatory” nature of referendum elections, they are prone to several notable drawbacks. First, question wording and ordering can have significant effects on outcome. The gas referendum involved a series of five questions of various lengths and technical detail. Second, because question wording is itself a contingent factor in how voters react to referenda, the process by which the question wording is established is itself a decisive political process. Yet this process is still reserved for political elites, who naturally work to produce wording that will most likely guarantee their desired outcome. Finally, because referendum votes are enacted by government officials and elected

representatives, the referendum results—even if binding—may be in differently interpreted by the political elites responsible for executing government policy.

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

### **From Unitary Republic to De Facto Federalism**

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

While the central state's constitutional authority still supercedes the authority of municipal governments, the municipal governments are now enshrined in the national constitution and given a substantial amount of political and economic autonomy (they can even collect and administer their own local taxes).<sup>21</sup> Over time, municipal governments have also evolved differently, reflecting local social mores, economic necessities, or political

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<sup>21</sup> Even in federal systems, of course, the central state's authority supercedes the authority of the federal units.

practices. Some of the larger municipal governments have even instituted their own *guardia municipal*, a local police force independent of the Policía Nacional. Other (mostly rural) municipalities have adopted indigenous legal institutions. The result is that the country's 321 municipal governments have a significant degree of political and economic autonomy from the central state in ways that go beyond mere administrative decentralization.

Similarly, the decision in 2005 to allow direct, popular election of prefects (the administrative executives in charge of each of the nine departments) altered the relationship between the central state and its administrative units. While prefects are still constitutionally responsible to the central state—not their constituents—the logic of electoral politics dictates that prefects will seek to satisfy their voters, rather than the central state. Further, the reality that most of the country's current prefects belong to the political opposition means that the previous superior-subordinate relationship between presidents and prefects is effectively broken. And because the direct election of prefects was a concession to demands for greater regional political autonomy—the subject of an upcoming referendum—the change may signal the start of a second decentralization process that will further “federalize” the country.