

## CHAPTER VII

### POLITICAL CRISIS AND DEALIGNMENT

The 2005 general election followed a period of considerable political instability and crisis. On 17 October 2003, more than a month of social unrest in the capital city of La Paz—accompanied by total loss of state control in the city of El Alto and the surrounding Altiplano countryside—culminated in the resignation and self-imposed exile of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, elected only a year before. The next day, vice president Carlos Mesa—an independent historian and former television news anchor selected as Sánchez de Lozada’s running mate in the 2002 election—assumed the office of the presidency. This marked the first time a president was forced out of office since 1982 and shattered the political system in place since 1985. Twenty months later, Mesa himself stepped down in the midst of popular pressure. Although the 2005 election operated under the same institutional rules as the 1997 and 2002 elections, the acute political crisis that preceded it fundamentally altered its dynamics.

This chapter does not pretend to provide a history or analysis of the Bolivian crisis. Such a work stands outside the scope of this dissertation, which explicitly focuses on electoral politics and covers a broader time period. Nevertheless, a brief understanding of the affect of the *guerra del gas* is essential to understand the 2005 election. One key difference in post-2003 politics was a sharp polarization. While the *guerra del gas* made clear widespread discontent with the existing status quo—and the political parties that represented that status quo—it also served as a catalyst for a new regionalist movement out of the *media luna* departments. The 2005 election was also the first election in which none of the systemic

parties was expected to do well. In fact, only the MNR fielded a presidential candidate. Instead, the de facto “systemic” candidate, Jorge Quiroga, eschewed his own ADN to build a new political vehicle. Thus, while the formal institutional system was virtually unchanged from the 1997 and 2002 elections, the realities on the ground were powerful constraints on political elite strategies.

### **The *Guerra del Gas* and Its Impact**

The 2003 September-October *guerra del gas* (the “gas war”) unleashed widespread social unrest and discontentment against the political status quo. But after October, social mobilization diverged into two main forces. The first comprised the movements that had mobilized against the Sánchez de Lozada government. These included groups such as the landless movement (Movimiento Sin Tierra, MST), the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), the regional El Alto labor syndicate (COR-El Alto), the El Alto federation of neighborhood associations (FEJUVE), the indigenous movement loyal to Felipe Quispe, MAS and the *cocalero* movement led by Evo Morales, as well as various smaller labor, professional, and craft unions. While these groups often had their own intense organizational (and personal leadership) disagreements, they were generally characterized by opposition to the neoliberal economic policies of the previous two decades, disaffection with traditional political parties and other institutions of representative democracy, and were found principally in Andean regions of the country.

The second included forces that either supported continued neoliberal economic policies or that reacted against the new political power of the “Andean” social movements (or both). These principally included chambers of industry and commerce such as CEPB (Bolivian Confederation of Private Entrepreneurs) and CAINCO (the Santa Cruz Chamber

of Commerce and Industry), regional *comités cívicos* (particularly in Tarija and Santa Cruz), and regionalist groups such as the Nación Camba movement.<sup>1</sup> Though certainly many middle and upper class residents in Andean parts of Bolivia had benefited from and supported neoliberal economic policies, the organized face of such movements was extremely focused in lowland regions—with the vanguard found in the city of Santa Cruz. Unlike Andean social movements, which focused on socioeconomic transformations, the *media luna* social movements focused almost exclusively on the issue of regional autonomy.

While the first group of social movements were instrumental in toppling Sánchez de Lozada in October 2003, it was soon clear that many Bolivians—especially in the *media luna*—did not support the kind of political, social, and economic transformation the Andean movements pushed for. In many ways, the *media luna* movements were “reactionary” since they mobilized after, and principally in opposition to, the movements responsible for the *guerra del gas*. Yet, in other ways, the *media luna* movements were a natural extension of the logic of pluralist democracy. They represented organized social groups that demanded greater political and economic autonomy from the central state. Politically, the *guerra del gas* in many ways raised the stakes of competition, reviving the “politics as war” strategy prevalent until the early 1980s.

### **The 2004 Gas Referendum**

Bolivians voted for the first time in a referendum election in July 2004, only months after the practice was introduced in the 2004 constitutional reforms. The first referendum—on the issue of the country’s hydrocarbons policy—was meant to transfer the volatile

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<sup>1</sup> I make a distinction between “regional” groups such as the *comités cívicos* and “regionalist” groups such as Nación Camba. The former are broad civic organizations meant to represent a region’s civil society; the latter are ideologically committed to secession and demonstrate a substantial amount of anti-Andean xenophobia.

political issue from the streets to the ballot box. Mesa had, from the start, made a gas referendum the cornerstone of his presidency. Yet early in the development of the gas referendum, it was clear that Mesa's government was already crafting a hydrocarbons policy and planned to use the referendum simply to ratify this policy.<sup>2</sup> From the start, Mesa publicly and actively campaigned for a "Yes" vote. In the end, the referendum left voters and political elites deeply divided—particularly as the election's results were open to interpretation.

The 18 July 2004 gas referendum included five questions. These were:

1. Do you agree with repealing the Hydrocarbons Law (*Ley 1689*) enacted by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada?
2. Do you agree with recovering ownership of all hydrocarbons at the wellhead for the Bolivian state?
3. Do you agree with reestablishing Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), recovering state ownership over the Bolivian people's stakes in capitalized oil companies, so that it can participate in all stages of the hydrocarbons production chain?
4. Do you agree with President Carlos Mesa's policy of using gas as a strategic resource to achieve sovereign and viable access to the Pacific Ocean?
5. Do you agree that Bolivia export gas as part of a national policy framework that ensures the gas needs of Bolivians; encourages the industrialization of gas in the national territory; levies taxes and/or royalties of up to 50% on the production value of oil and gas on companies, for the nation's benefit; and earmarks revenues from the export and industrialization of gas mainly for education, health, roads, and jobs?

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<sup>2</sup> Another controversy with the referendum was the decision by Mesa's government to print only Spanish-language ballots, though these were accompanied with a massive government-sponsored "educational campaign" meant to inform voters about the meaning of each of the referendum's five questions.

Table 7.1

Results of the 2004 gas referendum, as percent of total votes cast

Question	Yes	No	Blank	Null
1. Do you agree with repealing the Hydrocarbons Law ( <i>Ley 1689</i> ) enacted by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada?	66.8	10.3	10.8	12.1
2. Do you agree with recovering ownership of all hydrocarbons at the wellhead for the Bolivian state?	71.7	6.1	9.8	12.5
3. Do you agree with reestablishing YPFB, recovering state ownership over the Bolivian people's stakes in capitalized oil companies, so that it can participate in all stages of the hydrocarbons production chain?	67.2	9.8	12.3	10.7
4. Do you agree with President Carlos Mesa's policy of using gas as a strategic resource to achieve sovereign and viable access to the Pacific Ocean?	39.5	32.6	17.1	10.7
5. Do you agree that Bolivia export gas as part of a national policy framework that: ensures the gas needs of Bolivians; encourages the industrialization of gas in the nation's territory; levies taxes and/or royalties of up to 50% on the production value of oil and gas on companies, for the nation's benefit; and earmarks revenues from the export and industrialization of gas mainly for education, health, roads, and jobs?	44.2	27.4	16.7	11.7

Data from the Corte Nacional Electoral.

Despite the election's high profile, voter turnout in the 2004 referendum was only 60.04%—the lowest voter turnout in any national-level election. Because Bolivian electoral law only counts “valid” votes (discounting blank and null ballots), the “Yes” vote won in each of the five referendum questions, despite the fact that “Yes” received less than a majority of the total votes cast in the final two questions.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, though voters overwhelmingly supported “recovering ownership of all hydrocarbons at the wellhead,” fewer voters supported pursuing “sovereign and viable access to the Pacific Ocean” even

<sup>3</sup> For detailed analysis of the 2004 referendum, see Tapia Mealla 2004.

though Mesa's government pandered considerably to popular anti-Chilean sentiment. Nevertheless, Mesa considered the referendum a success and proof of the legitimacy of his government's policy initiatives.

### The 2005 Election

Not long after Carlos Mesa assumed the presidency on 17 October 2003, presidential hopefuls began lining up for the expected presidential election. Mesa at first announced that his would be a transitional government and promised to call early elections. But by January 2004, he publicly declared his intention to finish out the remainder of Sánchez de Lozada's five-year presidential term until 6 August 2007.<sup>4</sup> For a time, Mesa maintained a high level of public support. While he was a political outsider sympathetic to many of social movements involved in the *guerra del gas*, he was also a member of the political elite and promised continued constitutional stability. Most importantly, his political discourse was (unlike previous presidents) heavily aimed at longstanding anti-Chilean sentiments.<sup>5</sup> Over time, however, his populist rhetoric was not enough to dissuade the demands from various social movements. A particularly thorny issue was the *autonomista* demands of many *media luna* social movements—who viewed Mesa's efforts to retain his popularity among La Paz and El Alto residents unfavorably. By June 2005, public confidence in Mesa's government had declined sharply. Efforts at brinkmanship—threatening to step down from office forced his street popularity upon the unpopular legislature—finally failed on 9 June 2005, when

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<sup>4</sup> *Mensaje de Carlos Mesa Gisbert*, La Paz (4 January 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Bolivia's 1879 war with Chile (in which Bolivia lost its sea coast) is a nationalist flash point. Many of the *guerra del gas* protesters expressed outrage that Bolivian gas would be exported through Chile. There were even rumors that "Chilean agents" were behind the Sánchez de Lozada government. Mesa's aggressive international diplomacy to regain sovereign access to the sea (Bolivia currently enjoys duty-free privileges at the Chilean port of Arica) was clearly a means to bolster his own domestic support among popular sectors. The history of the war is, of course, a controversial subject in Bolivia—particularly if one questions the "official" Bolivian version. For a broader discussion of the war, see Querejazu 1992, Farcau 2000, Turpo 1982.

parliament accepted his resignation. The presidency was assumed by Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé, the head of the Supreme Court, who immediately moved to prepare for early elections.<sup>6</sup>

The long-anticipated 2005 election came after two years of ongoing political crisis that virtually destroyed the pre-existing traditional party system. The election contrasted sharply with the previous five general elections. Although the 2005 election was conducted with the same mixed-member electoral system as the 1997 and 2002 elections, the inclusion of prefecture candidate lists on parallel ballots further increased the ability of voters to vote for local candidates. Similarly, the 2004 constitutional reforms broke the monopoly of political parties and made it easier for “citizen groups” and “indigenous communities” to campaign directly for public office.<sup>7</sup>

While the 1997 and 2002 elections allowed voters two ballot choices—presidential candidate lists and uninominal legislative candidates—the 2005 election allowed a third choice: prefectural candidates. Unlike uninominal candidates, however, prefectural candidates were not tied to the presidential contest. The 2005 prefectural election was a parallel election and not formally included in the “general election” process.<sup>8</sup> Prefectural candidates were listed on separate ballot sheets and included parties different from those

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<sup>6</sup> Constitutionally, the order of succession places the president of the Senate and the president of the House of Deputies before the president of the Supreme Court. The unpopularity of (especially) Hormando Vaca Diez (MIR) and Mario Cossío (MNR), particularly among Andean social movements, made any orderly succession difficult. In part, Mesa clearly used this in his negotiations with parliament, knowing full well that he was more popular than either figure among the La Paz-El Alto street. After Vaca Diez and Cossío stepped aside, parliament speedily accepted Mesa’s 6 June offer of resignation and named Rodríguez Veltzé president.

<sup>7</sup> The 2004 constitution changes to Articles 222, 223, and 224 outlined that political representation is expressed through “political parties and/or citizen groups and/or indigenous communities” (previously representation was limited to political parties). Of course, it is unclear how such citizen groups—which must also register for legal (or “juridic”) personality with the National Electoral Court—are substantially different from “political parties” (defined as organizations that seek political power through the electoral process) in anything other than name.

<sup>8</sup> The National Electoral Court divided the electoral process into a “general election” (for president, senators, plurinominal deputies, and uninominal deputies) and a “prefectural election.”

listed on the presidential and uninominal ballot. In contrast, all the uninominal legislative candidates represented a corresponding presidential electoral list. Thus, many candidates for prefect ran as independents nominated by a citizen group that did not present candidates for president or parliament—though many entered into formal alliances with presidential candidates.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the 2005 election also followed a period of intense political and electoral activity. The 2004 municipal elections were the first test for many of the political parties. The poor performance of the established political parties was a sign that the political landscape had fundamentally changed after the events of February and October 2003. The July 2004 referendum on gas was also the first popular referendum in Bolivia's democratic history, and raised expectations of future referendum—especially on the issue of regional autonomy. The consequence was that by December of 2005, Bolivian voters had gone to the polls a record three times in eighteen months. Likewise, the sheer number of marches, manifestations, and other forms of direct political action in the period between October 2003 and December 2005 coincided with growing demands for a constituent assembly and greater forms of direct political participation for individuals and interest groups.

### **Parties and Candidates**

A total of eight parties participated in the 2005 general election, three fewer than in 2002. Of the four of these that had participated in previous elections, two were antisystemic parties (MAS and MIP), one was a neopopulist party (NFR), and only one was a traditional systemic party (MNR). The remaining electoral lists represented a mix of new and old

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<sup>9</sup> Under such alliances, parties with presidential candidates did not officially participate in the respective presidential contest. E.g. Podemos did not “officially” nominate candidates in Tarija, Santa Cruz, or Cochabamba, but endorsed the “independent” candidacies of regional political alliances.



political options emerging from the 2002 dealignment. These included a wing of the labor movement (USTB), a citizens' electoral alliance (FREPAB), two new electoral vehicles launched by high-profile "systemic" politicians (Podemos and Unidad Nacional). The 2005 election also marked the sharpest polarization since 1985, with the electoral campaign quickly focusing on two presidential candidates: Jorge Quiroga (Podemos) and Evo Morales (MAS). Though somewhat reductionist, the MAS and Podemos campaigns represented two polar opposites: MAS represented the left, the popular classes, the indigenous and *cholo* demographic, and "Andean" Bolivia. Podemos represented the right, the middle and upper classes, the *mestizo* and *criollo* demographic, and the *media luna*. In such a polarized political atmosphere, other parties and lists had limited political space to contest.

Early on it was clear that Morales, the *cocalero* leader and an important figure of the 2003 protests, would again be the MAS presidential candidate. Morales' strong second-place showing in 2002 also made him a natural choice for voters who rejected traditional parties but wanted to back a candidate with real potential to win. MAS, historically a syndicalist movement rather than an institutionalized party, had after 2003 developed a close alliance with various rural, labor, and other sectoral syndicalist organizations. During that time, Morales had also tried to distance himself from his image as a rabble-rouser in order to seek support from the middle classes. An alliance with the popular mayor of La Paz, Juan Del Granado, went a long way to gaining the confidence of many in the *paveño* middle class.<sup>10</sup> The addition of Alvaro Garcia Linera, a sociologist and former guerrilla leader, as Morales'

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<sup>10</sup> Juan Del Granado had been a member of MBL before forming his own political party, MSM (Movimiento Sin Miedo). The announcement in June 2005 of a *frente amplio* alliance between MAS and MSM was an early boost to Morales' presidential campaign.

running mate also added both intellectual gravitas and a historical ideological leftist trajectory to the MAS electoral campaign.<sup>11</sup>

Another early presidential contender was Jorge Quiroga. Unable to constitutionally run for election in 2002, the youthful Quiroga nonetheless remained quite popular—topping many newspaper polls of “potential presidential candidates” between 2003 and 2005. Interestingly, Quiroga early on created a new political vehicle—Poder Democrático y Social (Podemos)—rather than organizing a campaign under the banner of ADN.<sup>12</sup> Though the systemic party formed a core element of the Podemos “social coalition,” Quiroga clearly expressed the desire to move beyond parties and establish a broad social front that included all social sectors. An alliance with the popular mayor of El Alto, José Luís Paredes, strengthened Quiroga’s image as a reformist, rather than (merely) a systemic status quo candidate. He was joined by María René Duchén, a well-known female Bolivian television news anchor, as vice presidential candidate.

The first candidate out the gate was Samuel Doria Medina, a wealthy entrepreneur who publicly left MIR and announced his Frente de Unidad Nacional, a well-funded alliance of social movements, in November 2003. Few were shocked when Doria Medina officially announced his candidacy for the presidency on 5 July 2005—a day before the election was officially announced. Despite periodic lulls, Unidad Nacional maintained an active public relations campaign during the two years leading up to the December 2005 election. Doria

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<sup>11</sup> García Linera’s inclusion to the ticket also signaled a potential ideological and tactical shift in MAS. Previously, MAS had aligned itself closely with well-known *poristas*, such as Filemon Escobar, who led the MAS parliamentary delegation. During the 2005 electoral campaign, MAS appealed to middle-class leftist intellectuals less tied to the Trotskyite syndicalist tradition.

<sup>12</sup> Quiroga’s decision to campaign without the ADN party label reflects problems within the party following the Banzer’s death. In part, his refusal to campaign on behalf of ADN in 2002 showed Quiroga already distancing himself from other party leaders. After the 2004 municipal elections, Quiroga publicly stepped down as leader of ADN and formed the Century XXI Alliance (*Alianza Siglo XXI*), a network of social-civic groups that campaigned as “Podemos.”

Medina declared himself a “third way” centrist balanced between Quiroga and Morales, though he directly attacked Morales as too radical and called upon voters to “democratically blockade Evo Morales” from the presidency after having “so long suffered his blockades.”<sup>13</sup> Doria Medina’s choice for running mate—Carlos Dabdoub, a leader of the Nación Camba movement—was also highly controversial and hindered the ticket’s appeal to Andean voters.

The only systemic party to present an electoral list, the MNR entered the 2005 contest in deep crisis. The MNR’s presence in the 2005 election is outlined in a later section in this chapter. Here, it is sufficient to note that the party nominated a relatively unknown candidate, Michiaki Nagatani in a campaign meant to demonstrate the party’s continued relevance in post-2003 politics.

None of the other traditional parties officially participated in the 2005 election. ADN was principally incorporated into Podemos and contributed a number of parliamentary candidates. MIR had originally presented a list of candidates, headed by Hormando Vaca Diez, but the party soon withdrew in what many critics called a “suicide.” Paz Zamora insisted that his party not participate in the general election, but rather focus on prefecture contests. Zamora’s pact with Quiroga (in exchange for Podemos’ support for Zamora’s bid for the prefecture of Tarija) strengthened the Podemos list with support from many MIR rank-and-file. Other MIR members, however, joined the Unidad Nacional list. MBL was also left in a weak position due to its close alliance with MNR in the 2002 election, and much of its support was scattered into pro-MAS and oppositional factions. Finally, UCS also split internally, with many former members flocking to other electoral lists—principally Unidad Nacional and Podemos.

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<sup>13</sup> *La Razón* (6 July 2005). The blockade reference alluded to the frequent use of road blockades as a political tactic frequently used by Morales and other syndicalist and indigenous leaders.

Felipe Quispe was again the MIP presidential candidate. The party retained much of the same platform and discourse from the 2002 election. This time, however, the party's expectations were significantly lower than in 2002, once it was clear that MAS had captured much of its political space. Early rumors of a potential MAS-MIP alliance (including the possibility that Quispe would be Morales' running mate) soon proved false, as personal rivalries between the two leaders led to a decisive break. Quispe's running mate was again a female candidate (Camila Choquetijlla), a grocer merchant in the city of El Alto.

The rest of the field was comprised of two new party lists—USTB (Unión Social de Trabajadores de Bolivia) and Frepab (Frente Patriótico Agropecuario de Bolivia)—and the “official” NFR candidate. The two smaller parties represented various independent syndicalist movements not aligned with any of the other lists and had marginal expectations. The NFR candidate, Gildo Angulo, ran despite strong opposition from the party's founder, Manfred Reyes Villa—who had formed an electoral alliance with Podemos.

### **The Electoral Campaign**

In large measure, the 2005 election was something of a referendum on the nature and direction of post-2003 Bolivian politics. All major candidates accepted most of the “*agenda de octubre*” (the “October agenda”) that had formed the core political issues since Sánchez de Lozada's resignation in 2003. Beyond criticisms of specific general policies—such as calls for a revision of the country's neoliberal economic policies in place since 1985—the agenda also appealed for a “re-founding” of the country, including calls for a constituent assembly to write a new political constitution. But it also included increasing demands (mainly from *media luna* departments) for regional political autonomy. In part, the parallel direct election of department prefects (the first election of its kind) was a step

towards greater regional autonomy. Yet both demands demonstrate the erosion of social consensus on the country's existing social, political, and economic structure. With even candidates like Quiroga and Nagatani advocating some type of structural reform, the election soon became a question of how much change.

While Morales was not the most radical of the anti-establishment presidential candidates, he was one of the status quo's most vocal and established opponents.<sup>14</sup> With an early lead in the polls, Morales soon became the likely plurality winner. But topping out at 34.2% in the last pre-electoral poll, a majority victory was not seen as likely.<sup>15</sup> The question for many analysts and pundits was whether Morales or Quiroga (who, polling 29.2%, was sure to place second) would be able to secure a legislative coalition for any subsequent parliamentary presidential election. Early in the campaign, rumors flew about the possibility of a secret coalition agreement between Morales and Doria Medina, the "third way" neopopulist and Unidad Nacional presidential candidate (who denied such rumors). As the campaign progressed, Doria Medina dropped from 16.9% to 8.9% in four polls conducted by Ipsos Captura for *Usted Elige*<sup>16</sup> between October and December.

The result was an increasing polarization between two candidates—Morales and Quiroga—who stood for markedly different political options. While Quiroga's platform advocated some structural reforms, he clearly stood as the only candidate from the political right and the one least likely to make radical political or economic structural changes. The

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<sup>14</sup> Arguably the most radical presidential candidate was Felipe Quispe (MIP), a former EGTK guerrilla member and proponent of an autonomous, indigenous republic. While Quispe is (in Bolivia) about as well-known as Morales, his political support has never extended much further than the La Paz Altiplano and his party has never had more than a marginal impact on national electoral politics.

<sup>15</sup> The poll, distributed through several newspapers' *Usted Elige* inserts on 14 December, was conducted by Ipsos Captura, an international polling organization.

<sup>16</sup> *Usted Elige* is a periodical publication of election information published jointly through four newspapers: *La Prensa* (La Paz), *Los Tiempos* (Cochabamba), *El Deber* (Santa Cruz), *El Potosí* (Potosí), and *Correo del Sur* (Sucre). Its main competitor is *Recta Final*, a joint project involving the newspapers *La Razón* (La Paz), *El Nuevo Día* (Santa Cruz), and the ATB television network.

December 2005 election thus was the first to pit two “presidentiable” candidates who represented sharply different political options.

In sharp contrast to previous elections, the 2005 contest was the first without presidential debates. Despite numerous public appeals by Quiroga, Morales repeatedly refused to engage in direct political debates. Instead, the campaign relied primarily on campaigns through the media (including extensive use of the internet), as well as traditional campaign rallies. The two primary candidates traveled extensively throughout the country; other candidates traveled much less extensively, though Doria Medina and Nagatani also made numerous public appearances throughout the country.

The lack of televised, public debate between the major candidates was significant. In part, the MAS campaign strategy relied on painting Morales as an outsider who eschewed “formal” politics. Critics, of course, suggested that the grass-roots *cocalero* leader was deliberately avoiding confrontation with the highly educated, articulate Quirga. Regardless, the impact limited the campaign discourse to mass rallies meant to publicly and symbolically demonstrate public support for one or another candidate. Substantively, the 2005 campaign reverted to traditional populist mobilization strategies while avoiding direct confrontation between different ideological positions.

Subsequently, the rhetoric of the campaign’s discourse focused more on symbolic than on substantive issues. Television spots focused on the charismatic personality of the presidential candidates, usually showing large masses of people cheering or marching. Another distinguishing feature was clothing. As early as 2004, Unidad Nacional began clothing its activists and potential candidates in white track jackets with the party’s logo emblazoned on the back and racing stripes in the party’s colors (blue and yellow). During the campaign, Podemos supporters and candidates (including Quiroga himself) were suited in

red track jackets with the party's yellow five-pointed star emblazoned. In contrast to the flashy Quiroga and Doria Medina, Morales' campaign dressed down in efforts to look more "humble" than his opponents—ironically, cobalt blue MAS track jackets soon also made their appearance during the campaign.

The end result, however, was an electoral campaign that over-emphasized the presidential contest (there was little individual attention paid to uninominal races) and devoid of specific programmatic appeals. Though some of the parties did distribute comprehensive political platforms, these were either primarily available via internet (e.g. MAS and Podemos) or presented as lengthy and difficult to read ideological tracts (e.g. MAS and Unidad Nacional). Unlike the 1993 and 2002 elections, the major parties did not present succinct, specific programmatic appeals—in large part because the campaigns were not engaged in political discourse, but rather in mobilizing mass support.

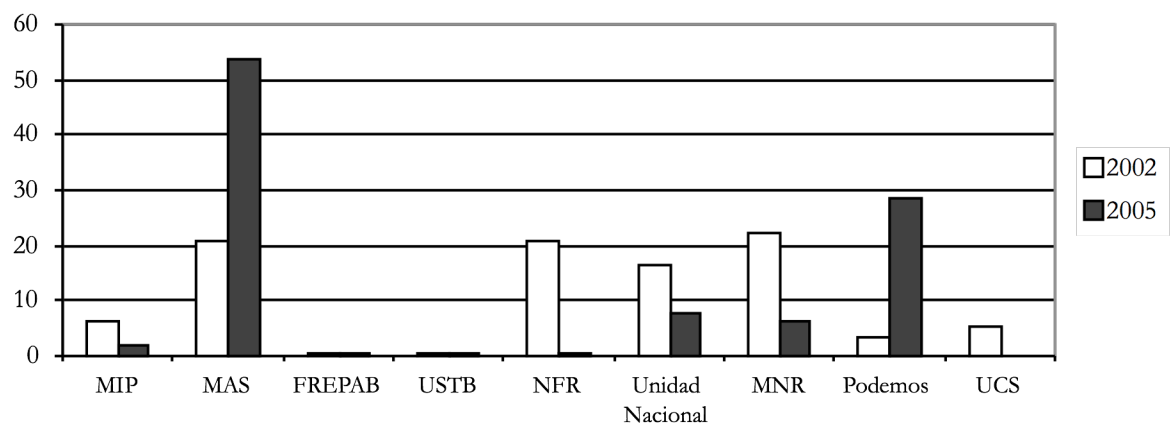
## **Election Results**

The 18 December 2005 general election was an important turning point in Bolivian politics. For the first time since democratization, a president was elected by direct popular vote, rather than by parliament. Evo Morales won a clear majority of the national popular vote (53.74%) and with almost twice as many votes as the second runner up, Jorge Quiroga (28.59%). The departmental results even gave Morales' MAS majority victories in five of nine departments; Quiroga's Podemos only won plurality victories in the remaining four departments. The 2005 general election was also marked by remarkably high voter turnout—higher than in all previous elections—reversing a trend in declining voter turnout. The share of valid votes (92.63%) was the second highest (after the 1993 general election) over all six post-transition elections, while the share of votes for lists that won at least one legislative

seat (96.60%) was the highest of any election. Finally, the virtual disintegration of the traditional party system (only the MNR fielded an electoral list) suggests widespread rejection of the previous party system. In short, the election seemed to give Morales a clear mandate.

Figure 7.1

Change in support for parties between 1997 and 2002 as percent of valid vote



Podemos figures for 2002 reflect ADN. Unidad Nacional figures for 2002 reflect MIR. USTB figures for 2002 reflect PS. FREPAB figures for 2002 reflect Condepa.

Two clear trends in the 2005 electoral data are an increased ideological and regional polarization (discussed below) and a sharp reduction in the effective number of parties. The second phenomenon is, of course, related to the first. But it is important to note that the number of national parties dropped from 5.8 effective parties in 2002 to 2.6 effective parties. More importantly, the two major parties in this new constellation were relatively new, representing catch-all constituencies from the left and the right. Whether a new two-party system emerges remains to be seen.

Interestingly, the effective number of parties across the nine departments was contradictory. The 2005 election saw a sharp decline in the effective number of parties in



Andean departments. The sharpest decline was in La Paz, which fell from a highly fragmented 6.0 (in 2002) to a highly concentrated 1.6. Three other departments saw their effective number of parties drop below 2.0 (Cochabamba, Oruro, and Potosí). While the effective number of parties also declined among the *media luna* departments, these were much smaller and nearly consistent with measures from previous elections. Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni, and Pando all had measures higher than 3.0 effective parties. For the first time, party systems in the *media luna* were more fragmented than party systems in Andean departments (where MAS dominated).

The second important development was a significant increase in the electorate's regional polarization—both politically and regionally. While a trend in regional polarization between Andean and *media luna* departments had been noticeable at least since the 1990s, the 2005 election sharpened this divide. One of the most salient political cleavages during the campaign was regional, rather than socio-economic (though socio-economic cleavages often played out within regions). While demographic indicators (such as class or ethnicity) continued to affect political attitudes and behavior, these have increasingly converged with (or been subsumed by) cross-regional differences.

Politically, voters converged into two basic “systemic” and “anti-systemic” camps. While both tendencies were already present in Bolivian politics, voters in each broadly defined camp split their votes between several electoral options. The 2005 election, however, saw a clear two-candidate contest from the start, with both Morales and Quiroga representing starkly contrasting political options. Presidential ballot votes were the most concentrated of any election, both nationally and across every department, as MAS and Podemos together captured 82.33% of all valid votes.

Despite his clear victory, Morales' election did not erase an increasing trend towards political polarization and regionalization in Bolivian politics. Instead, the 2005 election further sharpened the country's regional divisions (see Table 7.1). While Morales won a solid nation-wide majority, his support was disproportionately concentrated in Andean Bolivia, particularly in the populous slum city of El Alto, where the MAS presidential candidate won more than three quarters of all valid votes. In the *media luna*, Morales placed second in only two departments (Santa Cruz and Tarija) and placed third in two others (Beni and Pando). More importantly, Morales' electoral victory left him facing a powerful opposition able to wield effective checks against his presidency. Opposition parties hold a majority of senate seats, with rival Podemos holding one seat more than MAS and one seat short of a simple majority.

Table 7.2

Percent of valid vote for the four leading presidential candidates by department, 2005

	Evo Morales (MAS)	Jorge Quiroga (Podemos)	Doria Medina (UN)	Nagatani (MNR)
Chuquisaca	<b>54.17</b>	30.93	7.91	4.31
La Paz	<b>66.63</b>	18.10	6.80	2.55
Cochabamba	<b>64.84</b>	25.05	5.55	2.47
Oruro	<b>62.58</b>	24.96	5.42	3.91
Potosí	<b>57.80</b>	25.69	5.09	5.68
Tarija	31.55	<b>45.28</b>	7.18	14.02
Santa Cruz	33.17	<b>41.80</b>	12.49	11.58
Beni	16.50	<b>46.31</b>	6.25	30.12
Pando	20.85	<b>45.19</b>	23.23	10.01
National	53.74	28.59	7.80	6.47

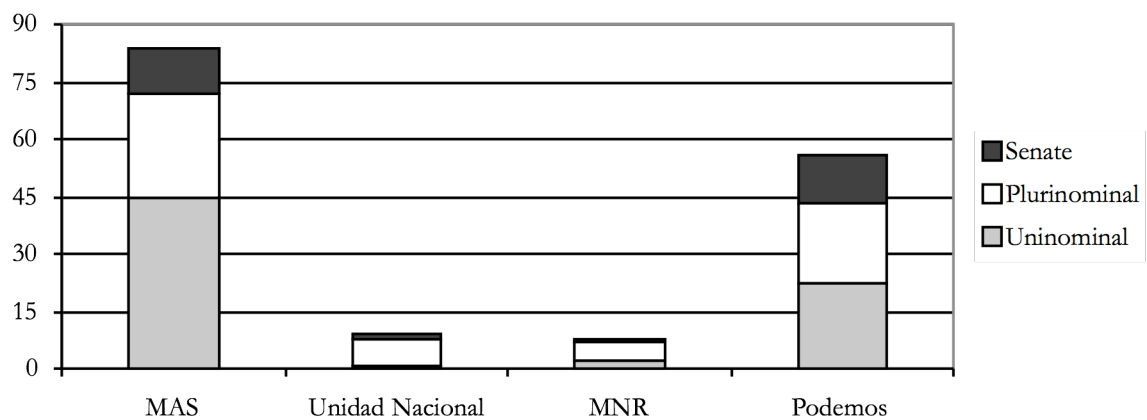
Data from the National Electoral Court. Department winners in bold.

Only four parties won parliamentary seats and the effective number of legislative parties dropped considerably to 2.4. Unlike the 1985 election, where two parties (the MNR

and ADN) won most of the legislative seats, this time only two other parties managed to win any additional seats. The result was a parliament that very closely resembled a typical two-party system, though with one party (MAS) in a dominant position relative to the other (Podemos). Interestingly, however, the difference in regional results left Podemos in a stronger position in terms of senate seats; MAS won only 12 seats to Podemos' 13 (one short of a simple majority in the chamber).

Figure 7.2

Parliamentary seats by party, 2002



Regional electoral differences were significant and suggest a more cautious analysis of the 2005 election, despite what on the surface looks like a clear MAS victory at the polls. A key component of this analysis is the results of the prefectural elections (discussed later in this chapter). Another component, however, is the marked differences between uninominal and plurinominal votes. Both factors combine with marked regional differences to suggest that Morales' support is wide, but not deep. By this I mean that while Morales' victory

demonstrated substantial national support for his personal presidential campaign, other MAS candidates received significantly lower levels of electoral support.

A comparison between plurinominal and uninominal votes shows a significant drop in electoral support for MAS as a political organization. While most of the other parties' aggregate vote shares remained roughly the same, aggregated uninominal MAS votes dropped more than ten points (to 43.52%). This is partly explained by cross-ticket voting, with minor increases in vote shares for Unidad Nacional and MNR candidates (vote shares for Podemos remained virtually unchanged). But the change was also partly driven by a twenty-point spike (to 24.48%) in the percentage of blank votes, suggesting that pro-Morales voters disproportionately cast blank votes for uninominal candidates. The number of blank uninominal ballots in 2005 was, on average, twelve points higher than in the previous election. In several uninominal districts, blank ballots accounted for nearly a third of all votes cast.

The large number of blank ballots cast for uninominal candidates is especially surprising, when one considers that prefecture ballots (which were on an entirely different paper ballot) had fewer blank votes even than the presidential-plurinominal ballot. Remarkably, more voters cast ballots for a prefectural candidate than for a presidential candidate. Thus, despite participating in their third election under a mixed-member electoral system, voters cast large shares of blank votes for the second (uninominal) half of their ballot—even when most then went on to mark a second (and different) ballot sheet to mark their preferred prefecture candidate.

While the 2005 presidential election gave Morales a clear and direct popular victory, there is considerable question about how enduring this support will be. The tension and high stakes of the contest, combined with pre-electoral polling data, suggest that Morales' victory

was more personality-based than policy-oriented. Perhaps voters were willing to let Morales take the presidency, but were hesitant about giving his party all the reigns of power. Shortly after the election, there were disputes even within Morales' own coalition over the direction of the new government.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Morales' election stiffened the opposition—concentrated in *media luna* Bolivia—to press for greater regional political autonomy. The political conflict between the central government and regional autonomy movements has now taken center stage, forcing the Morales government to negotiate a difficult compromise with the opposition that limited his party's ability to dominate the upcoming constituent assembly.<sup>18</sup>

### **Government Formation**

Unlike in previous elections, Morales' majority victory at the polls eliminated the need for parliament to select a president. Instead, only a day after the preliminary electoral results, Quiroga had already conceded the presidency to Morales. The new president-elect soon set about organizing a new cabinet in anticipation of his 21-22 January inaugural ceremonies.<sup>19</sup> The new cabinet was composed of sixteen ministers (including two ministers without portfolio). Many of the cabinet members were members of social movements that had supported MAS during the electoral campaign, some of these with limited political administrative experience.

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<sup>17</sup> Though much of this can be reduced to arguments over how to divide government spoils, such as cabinet and sub-cabinet appointments, many of the disagreements were more fundamental. The broad MAS coalition included many groups with contradictory policy goals, each making demands from the incoming Morales government.

<sup>18</sup> The scope of this dissertation does not include analysis of the July 2006 Constituent Assembly election.

<sup>19</sup> On 21 January, Morales held a symbolic indigenous ceremony at Tiwanaku, where he was "crowned" with the Aymara title of Apu Mallku (literally, "supreme chief"). The official inaugural ceremony was held in parliament on 22 January.

An early concern for the new administration was the lack of a majority in the Senate (it had a comfortable majority in the House of Deputies), where it would require support from both the MNR and Unidad Nacional if Morales hoped to secure a legislative majority in the chamber. Nevertheless, the new 2005 administration was the first one-party government—though one must keep in mind that MAS is less a political party than an alliance of diverse social movements. Other than an agreement with Juan Del Granado's MSM, Evo Morales' presidency avoided political agreements with other political parties. Still, the wide variety of social movements allied with the core MAS organizational structure (heavily concentrated on *campesino* syndicates of the Cochabamba valleys) suggests potentials for internal divisions within the MAS alliance. Similarly, the strong regionalist opposition to radical structural reforms hinders the government's maneuverability. Despite a comfortable majoritarian victory for Evo Morales, his government will govern a deeply polarized Bolivia.

### **The 2005 Prefectural Elections**

The 2005 prefectural election was the first of its kind in post-democratization Bolivia. The decision to allow for direct popular election of Bolivia's nine departmental prefects was a compromise decision meant to appease proponents of greater regional autonomy who demanded a public referendum on regional (i.e. departmental) autonomy.<sup>20</sup> Though lacking popularly elected departmental assemblies or other autonomic institutional structures, the election of prefects (previously appointed by the president) gave departmental prefects considerable control over their department's economic and political resources. The move extended the trend towards political decentralization initiated during the 1993-1997 Sánchez de Lozada presidency.

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<sup>20</sup> A public referendum on the question of regional autonomy was finally scheduled for July 2006.

Each department's electoral contest was contested by a different set of parties and electoral alliances. Not all parties that contested the presidency and parliamentary seats fielded prefectural candidates; likewise, many regional parties or electoral alliances fielded prefectural candidates but did not field presidential or parliamentary candidates. Only MAS put forward candidates for prefect in all nine departments. Podemos and the MNR put forward official candidates in only five departments, while UN only put forward candidates in four departments. In contrast, MIR, which did not participate in the general election, nevertheless campaigned for three prefectures—with its historic leader and founder, Paz Zamora, campaigning for the prefecture of Tarija under the Convergencia Regional (CR) banner. Several of the “independent” candidates, however, actually joined in political pacts with Podemos (which did not field competitors). These included Paz Zamora in Tarija, Manfred Reyes Villa in Cochabamba, and Rubén Costas in Santa Cruz. Thus, Podemos indirectly campaigned for prefectures in all nine departments.

In La Paz, the chief contenders were José Luis Paredes, the popular mayor of El Alto, and Manuel Morales Dávila.<sup>21</sup> Paredes had previously abandoned MIR to form his own political platform, Plan Progreso (PP), and won reelection as El Alto mayor in December 2004. Until September, Paredes negotiated with Unidad Nacional, before signing a pre-electoral accord with Podemos. Meanwhile, MAS negotiations with the powerful FEJUVE fell apart, leaving MAS to nominate Morales Dávila, a socialist septuagenarian who had participated in previous IU and MAS electoral lists. Surprisingly, MAS was unable to win the prefecture of the department that voted for Evo Morales by the widest margin.

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<sup>21</sup> The only other significant candidate was David Vargas, the police major who had led the February 2003 mutiny. Since February 2003, he had built a small, semi-clandestine personalist political movement. He polled 11.98% as a prefectural candidate for FREPAB.

The chief contenders in Cochabamba were Reyes Villa, the 2002 NFR presidential candidate, and Jorge Alvarado, a geologist who had assumed control over the city of Cochabamba's water utility after the April 2000 *guerra del agua*. Reyes Villa's candidacy was potentially controversial, since he abandoned the party he himself had created only a decade earlier to form a new regional political vehicle, Alianza de Unidad Cochabambina (AUN). Early in the campaign, Reyes Villa signed a pre-electoral accord with Podemos; though Reyes Villa would run under the AUN banner, Podemos would not present a candidate, but would actively support the Reyes Villa campaign. The campaign essentially pitted Reyes Villa's urban political machine against MAS' rural social networks. Again, the results were something of a political surprise. The Podemos-endorsed Reyes Villa won a clear victory in Cochabamba, a traditional MAS stronghold.

The prefectural contest in Santa Cruz was split between three candidates: Rubén Costas, Freddy Soruco, and Hugo Salvatierra. Costas, a key figure among the department's regionalist leaders, campaigned with an electoral alliance named Autonomías para Bolivia (APB) that included many members of ADN, MIR, UCS. The campaign was closely tied to Podemos, which endorsed Costas in the department. Soruco, a popular general in the national police, had earlier formed a civic association known as Alianza-3 (A3).<sup>22</sup> He campaigned in close alliance with the MNR, using the banner A3-MNR. Salvatierra, a rural social activist, campaigned as the MAS prefectural candidate. Not surprisingly, the MAS candidate failed to win the Santa Cruz prefecture, placing a distant third. The Podemos-endorsed Costas won a clear victory, with nearly three quarters of Santa Cruz voters choosing either Costas or Soruco, the MNR-endorsed candidate.

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<sup>22</sup> The complete name of the organization is: Alianza Trabajo, Responsabilidad, Eficiencia y Seguridad (or Alianza-TRES).



Tarija saw similar results as Santa Cruz. There, the contest involved only three candidates: Mario Cossío (head of the MNR’s parliamentary delegation), Paz Zamora, and Luis Alfaro Arias, a rural social activist. The Tarija prefecture contest saw the MNR’s strongest performance in the 2005 election. Though campaigning under the banner of a newly-formed electoral alliance, Camino al Cambio (literally, “Path towards Change”), Cossío’s relationship with the MNR was never severed.<sup>23</sup> The results were stunning. Cossío won the Tarija contest with 45.65% of the valid vote, while the Podemos-endorsed Paz Zamora placed second with 33.92% and the MAS candidate only received 20.43%.

Table 7.3  
Percent of valid vote for prefecture candidates by department, 2005

	MAS	Podemos (or ally)	MNR (or ally)	Unidad Nacional
La Paz	33.81	<b>37.99</b>	2.47	4.84
Cochabamba	43.09	<b>47.64</b>		5.34
Oruro	<b>40.95</b>	28.26	4.84	8.23
Potosí	<b>40.69</b>	29.81	6.91	4.72
Chuquisaca	<b>42.31</b>	36.34	5.73	
Tarija	20.43	33.92	<b>45.65</b>	
Santa Cruz	24.17	<b>47.88</b>	27.95	
Beni	6.72	<b>44.64</b>	29.82	
Pando	6.00	<b>48.03</b>		45.97

Data from the National Electoral Court. Winners in bold.

Results in other Andean and *media luna* departments reflected this regional polarization. In Beni and Pando, MAS prefectural candidate failed to win seven percent of the valid vote. Instead, both departments saw Podemos candidates win substantial victories.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Oruro, Potosí, and Chuquisaca saw the only MAS prefectural

<sup>23</sup> Cossío was frequently referred to as the *movimientista* or *emenerrista* candidate and his ballot color employed the MNR pink.

<sup>24</sup> The winners were: Ernesto Suárez Sattori in Beni and Leopoldo Fernández in Pando.

victories.<sup>25</sup> Even there, however, Podemos candidates did well, winning a similar or greater share of the valid than Quiroga did in the presidential contest.

The new, elected prefects impose serious limitations on the MAS-led government. Because they were popularly elected by regional constituencies, political opponents such as Reyes Villa, Paredes, Costas, and Cossío can claim the same kind of popular legitimacy as Evo Morales. Similarly, the *autonomista* prefects can claim an electoral mandate in favor of greater regional political autonomy. Perhaps more importantly, their positions as prefects give such leaders institutional resources with which to challenge the central state and its MAS-led government in ways, while providing incentives for even greater political autonomy in order to further insulate their political base from the central government. At the very least, the democratically elected prefects present a powerful political institutional check on the Morales presidency.

### **The Decline of the MNR?**

The decline of the MNR (the political party with the longest historical trajectory in Bolivian politics) in the 2005 election deserves special attention and should be taken in context. While the party's fourth place finish (6.47%) was its worst ever, it did remarkably well when compared to the virtual disintegration of ADN in the 2002 election (3.40%). After Sánchez de Lozada's overthrow in October 2003, public sentiment against the MNR—particularly in Andean La Paz and Cochabamba—was extremely high. And in the two years leading up to the December 2005 election, the party was highly divided over issues of leadership, policy platform, and future strategy.

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<sup>25</sup> The winners were: David Sánchez Heredia in Chuquisaca, Alberto Aguilar in Oruro, and Mario Virreira in Potosí.

The party's nomination of Michiaki Nagatani, after a contentious party congress in Santa Cruz, was a surprise. The previously-unknown son of Japanese immigrants impressed many with his austere campaign in the 2004 Santa Cruz municipal elections, but his citizen's group (Movimiento de Acción Ciudadana, MACA) had won only 3.86% of the city's vote.<sup>26</sup> Many expected a more experienced party figure to run for president; earlier rumors hinted at recognized names like Juan Carlos Durán (the 1997 presidential candidate), Percy Fernández (former mayor of Santa Cruz), or Moira Paz (senator from Tarija and daughter of Víctor Paz Estenssoro), who hoped simultaneously to distance themselves from Sánchez de Lozada while campaigning on their previous public office records. Almost immediately after Nagatani's nomination was announced, several party leaders (including Durán and Moira Paz) denounced the nomination as manipulated by partisans loyal to Sánchez de Lozada. The MNR thus entered the 2005 election after a controversial nomination that bitterly divided party leaders (members even come to blows during the nomination process) and with a candidate with little name recognition but accused of simply being creature of Sánchez de Lozada.

Nevertheless, Nagatani ran a steady campaign that slowly gained momentum.<sup>27</sup> A somewhat-reconciled party machine and an electoral list that included many established MNR figures and incumbents, such as his vice presidential candidate, Guillermo Bedregal,

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<sup>26</sup> Because the 2004 constitutional amendments loosened the requirements for candidates to run for municipal elections (candidates could now run without the support of a "political party" but with the support of a "citizen's group" or "indigenous community"), Nagatani was able to campaign independently of the "official" MNR candidate (María Desiree Bravo, a uninominal deputy from Santa Cruz). Other established MNR members also campaigned independently, such as Roxana Sandoval (the popular, yet controversial, uninominal deputy from Santa Cruz) nominated by the citizen's group MCPP.

<sup>27</sup> Before Nagatani's candidacy was announced on 21 August 2005, his name was not included in any polls. A pre-electoral poll by Apoyo, Opinión y Mercado gave Nagatani only 2% nationwide in early September. Between the first week of October and the first week of December, a series of four Ipsos-Captura polls gave Nagatani between a low of 4.1% (the first poll) and a high of 5.5% (the third poll).

boosted Nagatani's presidential campaign.<sup>28</sup> While a few former MNR members became candidates on other electoral lists, most remained loyal and ran under the party's banner. More importantly, despite placing a distant fourth, the party retained its position as an important party in the four *media luna* departments—the same region where it had consistently done well since 1985—even winning an impressive 30.12% in Beni. Where Nagatani and the MNR did poorly was in Andean departments, especially La Paz and Cochabamba, where the MNR's fortunes had already been steadily in decline since the 1990s.

A brief comparison with the 1997 and 2002 elections is instructive. The MNR's 1997 presidential campaign was also plagued by problems, after its original candidate (René Blattmann) withdrew and was replaced by Durán. The campaign was hurried and disorganized, producing the party's worst showing to that time (18.59%). The 2002 Sánchez de Lozada campaign saw the party recover, but only slightly. More importantly, the party only picked up a few percentage points in the departments of La Paz (+3.16%), Cochabamba (+1.42%), and Oruro (+1.87%). Thus, when the MNR recovered almost four points nationally between 1997 and 2002, its recovery was markedly smaller in Andean departments. The MNR had effectively lost support from two traditionally important sectors of its electorate: the mining communities of Oruro and the rural communities of the Cochabamba valley. Similarly, the party's substantial national decline between 2002 and 2005 was greater in the same Andean departments, and smaller in *media luna* departments.

The MNR's respectable showing in the 2005 electoral contest suggests the party may yet play an important role in regional and national politics for some time to come. More importantly, the party has demonstrated a significant level of institutionalization. Unlike

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<sup>28</sup> Bedregal was an established MNR elder statesman, having played a key role in the party since 1952. In the post democratization period, he was elected deputy from La Paz in 1985, 1989, 1993, and plurinomial deputy in 1997; Bedregal also served briefly as Planning Minister (before he was replaced by Sánchez de Lozada) and later as Foreign Minister in the 1985-1989 Paz Estenssoro administration.

ADN, the party has survived both the death of its founders and a deep crisis of legitimacy following Sánchez de Lozada's deeply troubled and controversial second presidency. Its single seat in the Senate also gives the MNR a significant role, as it gives the party a balancing role between MAS and Podemos—especially since a pro-MAS majority requires cooperation from both the MNR and Unidad Nacional (which also has a single seat). This puts Morales in the uncomfortable position of needing the support of the political party that epitomizes the pre-2003 status quo. Even its seven seats in the House of Deputies give it a sizeable presence. Finally, although the party only officially campaigned for five prefectures (it placed a strong second in Beni and Santa Cruz), the campaign for the prefecture of Tarija by Mario Cossío gave the party a stronghold in one prefecture.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, the MNR no longer has the kind of broad national support it enjoyed in the 1980s and 1990s. But even at its lowest historical point, the party continues to have political relevance.

### **Concluding Remarks**

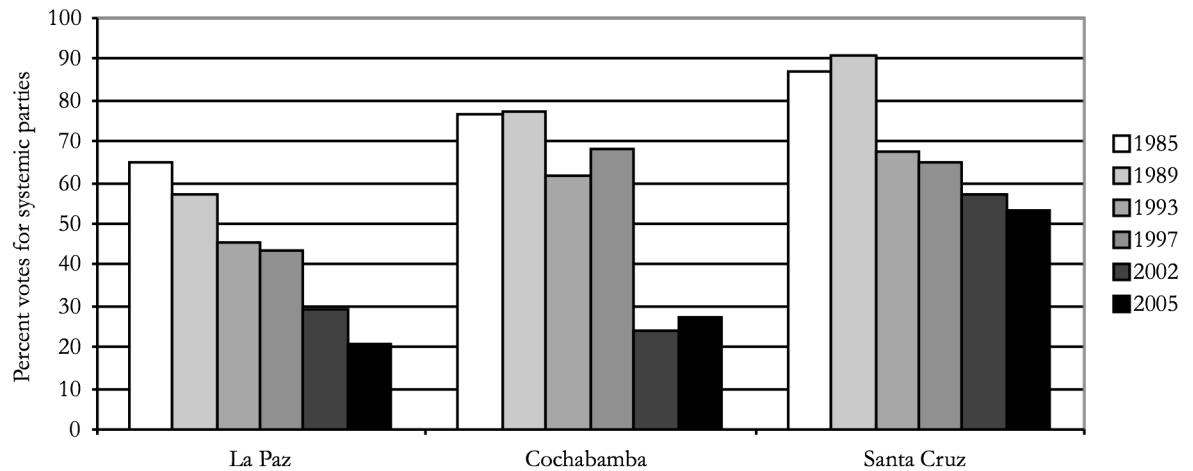
The 2005 election marked a clear decline in the electoral appeal of systemic political options. It is important to note, however, that this rejection of system political parties was not an entirely new phenomenon. A gradual erosion of support for systemic parties (the MNR, ADN, MIR) was noticeable by the 1990s, though its impact was most significant in Andean departments. Vote shares for systemic parties had steadily declined in Andean departments during the previous five elections. The 2005 election was most remarkable because it was the first election driven primarily by Andean voters.

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<sup>29</sup> Though Cossío did not officially run as an MNR candidate, the party did not present a list. Despite campaigning under the banner of the regional citizen's group, Camino al Cambio (CC), Cossío is still identified with the MNR and frequently referred to in newspaper reports as "the MNR prefect" for Tarija.

Figure 7.3

Support for systemic parties in the three most populous departments across elections



Figures for 2005 include votes for Podemos, rather than only MNR. Since both opponents and supporters consider Podemos a status quo (or systemic) party and since most of its candidates (including Quiroga) were established members of systemic parties, I believe its inclusion is justified

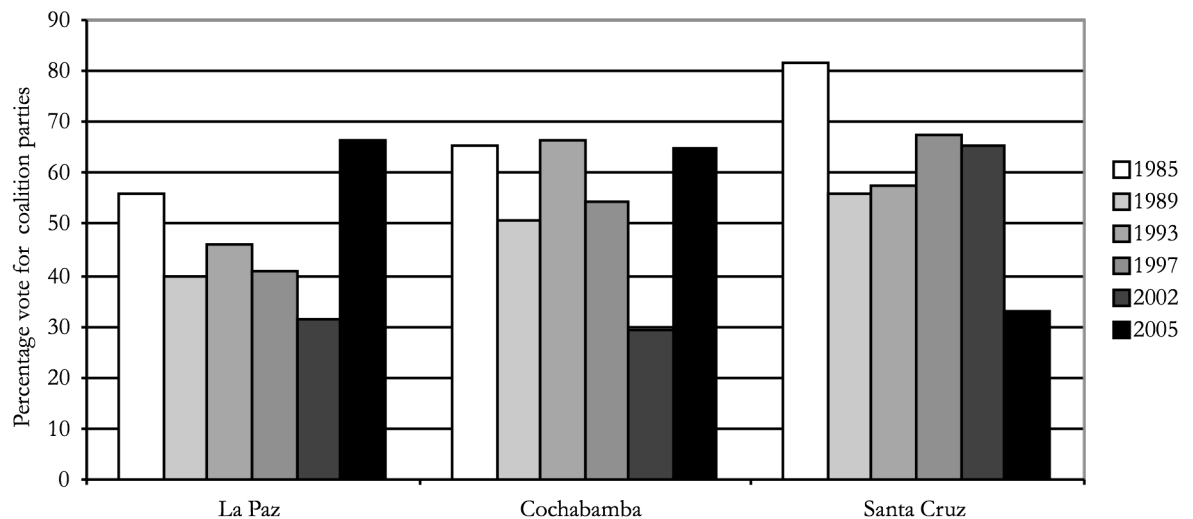
A contrast between the three most populous departments is instructive.<sup>30</sup> Since 1985, votes for systemic parties had consistently declined in the Andean departments of La Paz and Cochabamba to levels well below the national average (see Figure 7.3). Voters in *media luna* departments, on the other hand, continued to support systemic parties in much higher rates. Even in Santa Cruz, where support for systemic parties declined by the same degree as the decline in La Paz, support for systemic parties was substantially higher from the start. Perhaps more significantly, only a minority of voters in La Paz and Cochabamba (in contrast to a majority in Santa Cruz) consistently voted for parties that would go on to become members of the government coalition (see Figure 7.4). That is, a disproportionate number of voters in La Paz and Cochabamba voted for electoral “losers” across the five elections

<sup>30</sup> The three most populous departments are La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. Frequently referred to as the *eje troncal* (the country’s “axis”), they contain more than two-thirds of the national population and electorate.

preceding 2005. The 2005 election dramatically reversed this, creating a photo negative of the 2002 results—for the first time since 1985, most Santa Cruz voters (66.83%) had voted against an incoming government while most voters in La Paz (66.63%) and Cochabamba (64.84%) had voted for the incoming government.

Figure 7.4

Support for governing coalitions in the three most populous departments across elections



Figures for 1997 do not include votes for Condepa, which was a member of the government coalition until it was expelled a year later, in 1998. Figures for 2002 do not include votes for NFR, which was briefly a member of the coalition during a few weeks in 2003.

A significant factor in the MAS electoral victory was the substantial increase in votes for MAS in the department of La Paz from the party's votes in the 2002 election. In 2002, MAS had won in La Paz with only a small plurality (22.49%) in a field equably split between five candidates. The increase of 44.14 percentage points was the highest increase of any department. Whereas MAS won its narrowest department victory in La Paz in 2002, in 2005 it won its widest victory there. This dramatic change was principally driven by the city of El Alto, where MAS won a crushing 77.09% of the presidential ballot vote (compared to 55.68

in the city of La Paz).<sup>31</sup> Another key factor was the collapse of Felipe Quispe's MIP, the militant indigenous party that had in 2002 won a considerable 17.74% of the department's vote (beating all three systemic parties), giving it the fifth-largest share of seats in parliament. In 2005, however, the anti-systemic vote had consolidated into a single ballot option: MAS.

The immediate result, however, was a shift in electoral power from *media luna* to the Andean voters. Whereas previous governments required widespread support from *media luna* voters, the new Evo Morales government relied primarily on a decidedly Andean constituency. In response, *media luna* elites, particularly in Santa Cruz and Tarija, are now seeking means to prevent the kind of radical structural reforms they have long opposed. The new shift has also made claims of an unresponsive, centralist state more appealing to voters who, like the Altiplano voters of the 1990s, no longer see themselves or their interest represented by the new government. In contrast, Andean voters—particularly members of social and indigenous movements that have long opposed the systemic governments—pushing Morales' government to more speedily implement radical or anti-neoliberal structural reforms.

In many ways, these conflicts are both a product of and contribute to the escalation of polarized political conflict in Bolivia. A key question will be whether Morales chooses to continue the previous political system's tradition of coalition government and semi-consociational political practices, or whether he will instead pursue more typically "presidential" majoritarian political strategies. In large measure, this will be decided by how Morales decides to treat his political opponents—particularly those aligned with the *media luna* civic associations.

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<sup>31</sup> Votes cast for MAS in El Alto (236,015) alone comprise 8.21% of the total Bolivian electorate. Whereas in 2005 one in every six MAS votes was cast in the city of El Alto, only one in ten Bolivian votes was cast in El Alto.